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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 42nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 79: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

Draft resolutions A/C.2/45/L.30, A/C.2/45/L.31, A/C.2/45/L.36, A/C.2/45/L.39 and A/C.2/45/L.42

1. Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia) introduced the five above-mentioned draft resolutions on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77. With regard to draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.30, entitled "Developing human resources for development", the text reaffirmed that the human being was at the heart of the development process and that developing human resources was an essential means of ensuring that such development proceeded smoothly. That concept was the basis for the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, as well as, at regional level, the Jakarta Plan of Action, the Khartoum Declaration and the communiqué of the tenth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community. The human dimension was also the subject of the UNDP Human Development Report 1990.

2. The draft resolution emphasized the essential role of education and training, in particular the importance of modern means of communication and distance education programmes, as well as the vital role which qualified national personnel had to play in the developing countries. It stressed the need for human resources development strategies to concentrate on supportive measures in related areas such as health, nutrition, water, sanitation, housing, communications and employment, and recognized the importance of the participation of women and young people and the vital role that the public sector played in growth. It requested the Secretary-General to designate an appropriate focal point to co-ordinate the activities of different bodies of the United Nations system in the area and to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session a comprehensive report on the implementation of the resolution.

3. The States belonging to the Group of 77 hoped that they could count on the support of all members of the Committee, because developing human resources was clearly the most essential prerequisite for development.

4. Turning to draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.31, entitled "Net transfer of resources from developing countries and their impact on the economic growth and sustained development of those countries", the co-sponsors had taken as their starting-point the principle that there could be no development without investment and had stressed not only the causes of the net transfer of resources from developing countries to developed countries, but also its impact on the development of those countries. Various reliable sources, including the report of the South Commission, indicated that between 1984 and 1988, the net transfer of resources from the South to the North had totalled some $173 billion.

(Mr. Navajas-Mogro, Bolivia)

5. Concerning draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.36, entitled "Economic stabilization programmes in developing countries", his delegation recalled the significant efforts being undertaken by developing countries in order to achieve the revitalization of their economic growth and development. The text reaffirmed that the reactivation of economic growth and development in those countries would require a concerted and committed effort by all countries and emphasized the need for appropriate measures to ensure that stabilization and adjustment programmes provided for long-term and sustained development.

6. Turning to draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.39, entitled "Report of the South Commission", his delegation recalled that the Commission, composed of 26 prominent individuals from developing countries, had set itself the goal of promoting North-South dialogue. The report that it had recently published contained information of the utmost importance and constituted a valuable contribution to the process of thinking about development. The draft resolution requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the President of the Economic and Social Council, to convene a meeting, during the Council's second regular session in 1991 devoted to an informal exchange of views on the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report, in particular, in its executive summary. To that end, it invited Governments and the organs, bodies and organizations of the United Nations system to submit their views on the report. Lastly, it requested the Secretary-General to co-ordinate appropriate action to promote the recommendations contained therein.

7. Introducing draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.42, entitled "Industrial development co-operation and diversification and modernization of productive activities in developing countries", his delegation said that the text referred to, among other initiatives, the Lima Plan of Action, whose objective was to raise the developing countries' share in world industrial production to at least 25 per cent by the year 2000, a goal that was still far off, and to the New Delhi Plan of Action, in which a strategy had been spelt out for further industrialization of developing countries. The draft also pointed out that the General Assembly had proclaimed the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa for the purpose of mobilizing the commitment of the international community to the industrialization of that continent. The preamble underscored the importance of direct foreign investment and entrepreneurship and the central role of UNIDO as the co-ordinating organ in the United Nations system having primary responsibility for promoting the transfer of industrial technology to developing countries.

8. The operative paragraphs stressed that developing countries needed to provide adequate support to their infant industries to enable them to build up their industrial capacities, emphasized the need for more effective international co-operation, called upon UNIDO to help developing countries evaluate and select industrial technologies suitable for their development and to formulate scientific and technological programmes and plans for their industrialization, recognized the need to support co-operation among developing countries in that regard, including the sharing of information, and recalled that industrial growth stimulated that of other areas, particularly the agricultural and service sectors. The draft resolution requested the Secretary-General, in close co-operation with UNDP,

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(Mr. Navajas-Mogro, Bolivia)

UNCTAD, UNIDO and the World Bank, to prepare a study on the feasibility of creating a United Nations system fund aimed at ensuring financing for training scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs in developing countries, with a view to promoting all related sectors and disciplines supporting industrial development. The appropriate organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system were requested to make concrete proposals and recommendations, with a view to establishing priority programmes to be carried out in support of industrial development, and the Secretary-General was requested to give highest priority to the issue in the medium-term plan.

AGENDA ITEM 84: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.32

9. Mr. HARRISON (United Kingdom) briefly introduced draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.32, entitled "Future administrative arrangements for the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities".

AGENDA ITEM 79: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued) (A/45/25 (Supplement No. 25), A/45/350, A/45/663 and A/45/666)

AGENDA ITEM 80: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/45/46 (Supplement No. 46), A/45/177, A/45/303, A/45/313, A/45/336-S/21385, A/45/345, A/45/361, A/45/584, A/45/598-S/21854 and A/45/666)

AGENDA ITEM 81: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/45/177, A/45/303, A/45/361, A/45/598-S/21854, A/45/666 and A/45/696 and Add.1)

10. Mr. PEÑALOSA (Colombia) said that the problems of the developed countries could not be resolved without taking into account those of the developing countries. That was particularly true for environment-related problems, which must be the subject of a concerted and committed effort by the entire international community. Agreement currently existed both on the vital need to take decisive action to protect the ecological balance of the planet and on the close link between environment and development. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992, offered a unique opportunity to discuss strategies for environmental protection and to define clearly the guidelines for international co-operation on development. As pointed out by the President of Colombia when addressing the General Assembly, the cost of environmental protection must not fall exclusively on those developing countries that had major natural reserves. It was essential to banish the spectre of "ecological conditionality", which the countries primarily responsible for the degradation of the environment wanted to impose upon the developing countries. If prompt action was not taken to strengthen multilateral co-operation, the question might well become a new source of conflict between the North and the South.

(Mr. Peñalosa, Colombia)

11. His delegation felt that it was indispensable for the work and documents of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to focus on the close link between environment and development. It would support any decision to increase the financial resources made available to assist the developing countries to include environmental questions in their development plans and to develop environmentally sound technology.

12. It was indispensable that the developing countries should be able to participate not only in the preparations for the Conference but in the Conference itself. His delegation urged all countries to contribute generously for that purpose. It welcomed the organization and holding of regional conferences and said that it was important to set up the working group on legal and institutional matters as soon as possible. The contribution of the United Nations specialized agencies, bodies and programmes would be most valuable, as would that of governmental and non-governmental organizations. However, in respect of NGOs, only those in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council should be allowed to participate actively in the Conference. An NGO conference should be held in tandem with the United Nations Conference and it could be expected that, in accordance with the usual procedure, the conclusions of the NGO conference would be taken into account. Lastly, his delegation was in favour of the proposal that the United Nations Conference should be held at the level of Heads of State or Government.

13. Like so many others, his delegation recognized the seriousness of the problem of climate change. It had read with great interest the first report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and welcomed the results of the Second World Climate Conference, which had paved the way for the adoption of a framework convention on climate change. The General Assembly should take a decision on the proposal made by the Panel on the organization of the negotiation process which was essential if that process was to be concluded before the conference in 1992.

14. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the common interest would override individual interests and that the spirit of consultation and agreement based on the principles of international law would avert a disaster of world-wide proportions and point the way to international co-operation for development.

15. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that agenda items 79 (b), 80 and 81 were of particular importance for FAO in view of the multiple interactions between the environment and the management of natural resources for agriculture, forestry and fisheries and their consequences for food security. In his statement at the Second World Climate Conference, the Director-General of FAO had stressed that agriculture was the sector most at risk in any climate change and that such climate change would, in particular, exacerbate the precarious living conditions of a large number of rural people living in arid and semi-arid areas, low-lying coastal zones and other marginal lands.

16. FAO welcomed the recommendations of the scientific and technical report and the Ministerial Declaration of the Conference, which called for further research on and monitoring of the causes and impact of climate change in relation to

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

agriculture, forestry and fisheries. FAO intended to pursue and expand its programmes in those fields as it felt that the vital sectors of agriculture and food security had not been given sufficient attention by the Conference. Action should also be taken to meet short-term requirements by making policy changes in agriculture, forestry and fisheries and related trade patterns, which would make those sectors less vulnerable to the vagaries of weather and international market prices, particularly unfair terms of trade and technology transfer.

17. The threat of climate change provided added justification for strengthening several of FAO's ongoing programmes such as the global Early Warning System for food security, the Food Security Assistance Scheme, the Global Forest Resource Assessment and the Tropical Forestry Action Plan. FAO was prepared to appoint a liaison officer to assist in the preparation of the convention on climate and particularly the technical aspects of any protocols to that convention relating to agriculture and forestry and to establish the necessary links between FAO's complementary activities concerning a wider legal framework instrument on the conservation and development of forests and on biodiversity.

18. Global climate change would also certainly affect oceans and coastal zones and place additional strains on fishery resources, which were already affected in many areas by pollution and overfishing. It might, therefore, affect populations and countries that depended heavily on fisheries for their food and economic growth, and hence any efforts to protect, maintain and manage rationally the productive capacity of renewable resources were all the more justified. FAO, in particular, shared the concerns expressed in General Assembly resolution 44/225 on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas. One of the recommendations of the FAO expert consultation on driftnets held earlier during the current year was that there should be more studies of the legal problems posed by driftnets and that the legal régime governing fishing on the high seas should be examined more closely, possibly in collaboration with other United Nations agencies. At its most recent meeting, the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission had decided that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/225, large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing should not be allowed in the Commission's region, that a world-wide moratorium should be imposed on all large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing on the high seas by 30 June 1992, since no effective conservation or management measures had been taken and that the statistical analysis mentioned in resolution 44/225 should be rapidly carried out in order to determine what management and conservation measures were required in connection with the use of certain types of driftnets.

19. A major FAO contribution to the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was being developed in connection with a joint FAO/Netherlands conference on "Agriculture and the Environment: Strategies and Tools for Sustainable Agriculture and Development", to be held in Den Bosch, the Netherlands, in April 1991. FAO was also preparing an international action programme on water resources and on sustainable agricultural development within the framework of the Mar del Plata Action Plan. It was also participating actively in the Preparatory Committee's working parties on land and agriculture, the oceans and

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

freshwater resources, inter alia. It was also working on the legal and technical elements of a possible international instrument on the conservation and development of forests and was co-operating closely with UNEP and UNESCO in the preparation of a legal instrument on biological diversity. In making those many contributions to the United Nations system-wide efforts for the protection of the environment and sustainable development, FAO wished to ensure that adequate recognition was given to the vital interests which the food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors represented for the economies of the majority of member countries and to strike a proper balance between development goals and protection of the environment through the rational management and sustainable use of natural resources.

20. Mr. AL-MANA (Qatar) said that the world community was increasingly concerned over the extensive environmental degradation caused by human activities in both the rich and poor countries, which had led in some cases, to irreversible changes in the environment that threatened life-sustaining eco-systems. The many international meetings and declarations on that issue (such as the London Conference and the Helsinki, Nordic, Caracas, Amazon and Brasilia Declarations) demonstrated how important the problem was.

21. Environmental problems cut across national boundaries and could therefore be settled only through close co-operation among all nations and by means of international, regional and national measures. Such international instruments adopted on the subject as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal were among the major results of that co-operation.

22. Like other countries of the world, Qatar was aware of the gravity of environmental problems and had introduced all the necessary legislative and institutional measures to prevent environmental degradation. Together with the other States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, it was currently considering the possibility of acceding to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the relevant Protocol.

23. Environment and development were closely related. In its resolution 44/228, the General Assembly, convinced that the protection and enhancement of the environment were major issues that affected the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world, had decided to convene a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which would enable the international community to elaborate strategies and measures to halt environmental degradation in the context of national and international efforts to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development taking into account both the needs of present generations and the legitimate interests of future generations.

24. The success of the Conference would depend on wide-scale international co-operation and continuing growth in all countries. In particular, the developing countries must be provided with the additional resources and the technology they needed to protect their environment. Qatar attached great importance to that meeting and hoped that it would yield fruitful recommendations that would foster the development process and facilitate environmental protection.

(Mr. Al-Mana, Qatar)

25. Environmental problems could obviously not be resolved overnight; clear objectives must therefore be defined and all countries must work together to achieve them.

26. Mr. NATHON (Hungary) said that, during the past four decades, Hungary had experienced a period of rapid industrialization and urbanization, as well as an intensification of agricultural production, which had resulted in serious problems of environmental, atmospheric and water pollution. With its economic programme for national renewal, the Government intended to create conditions that would make all enterprises take an interest in protecting the environment. To that end, it would introduce a system of subsidies to encourage environmental protection through tax exemptions, preferential credits and subsidies. Society as a whole would benefit from the results of such measures.

27. International co-operation played an extremely important role in resolving environmental problems. In that regard, his delegation was encouraged by the statement made in the Committee by the States members of the European Community and was pleased to note that, without diverting attention and resources away from the developing countries, they intended to strengthen their co-operation with the Eastern and Central European countries in order to help them to deal with environmental degradation. In response to current and future environmental concerns and following the initiative launched by President Bush during his visit to Budapest in 1989, a Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe had just been set up in the capital. Its function was to preserve, improve and protect environmental quality and public health in the region and to promote nature conservation by utilizing world-wide experience and resources. The Centre would endeavour to accomplish those objectives in four main areas: data collection and dissemination, development of institutional capability, exchanges of information and environmental education. As an independent organization, it would not undertake research activities or emergency environmental action. It would encourage environmentally sound policies and changes at the local, regional and global levels by supporting pollution prevention, the transfer of technology, energy conservation and action to enhance public awareness about environmental health and environmental quality. Above all, it would serve as a source of information and assistance for the inhabitants of the region and would facilitate the development of national and regional environmental policies and programmes.

28. Hungary played an active role in seeking a solution to global environmental problems within the framework of UNEP and other international organizations. It participated in the Global Environment Monitoring System and supplied information to the International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals. It had also become a party to three important international conventions on nature conservation and species preservation, namely, the Bonn, Ramsar and Washington Conventions. It had signed the Montreal Protocol aimed at preventing any further depletion of the ozone layer. Following a Hungarian-Swiss initiative, an international agreement regulating the transboundary transport of hazardous wastes had been completed and opened for signature in 1989. Hungary also participated in the environmental and water conservation programmes launched under the auspices of the Economic

(Mr. Nathon, Hungary)

Commission for Europe. It had been among the first countries to ratify the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, adopted in Geneva in 1979, and had also signed the protocols to that Convention aimed at reducing sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions.

29. Hungary fully supported the preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and welcomed the outcome of the first session of its Preparatory Committee held at Nairobi in August. In that connection, it intended to establish in the near future a Hungarian National Committee on the Environment which would be composed of representatives of governmental institutions and of movements dealing with environmental protection, and would be the spearhead of nation-wide preparations for the Conference. Hungary supported the proposal by the Secretary-General of the Conference that the issues to be addressed should be divided into six principal fields, and considered that countries should be represented at the highest level. It was also in favour of the broadest possible participation of non-governmental organizations and was convinced that the Bergen Conference, organized by the Economic Commission for Europe, had made an important contribution to the preparations for the 1992 Conference.

30. Hungary attached great importance to questions of climate change and welcomed the results of the Second World Climate Conference and its Ministerial Declaration. It hoped that the organizational arrangements recommended would enable the negotiating process for a convention on climate change to be completed before the 1992 Conference. The future of Hungary was greatly affected by changes in its climate. The 1990 drought had inflicted heavy losses on the national economy. Hungary particularly wished to prevent the desertification of the country as a result of climate change, which might affect the energy supply, food production and water management. Disturbing signs had already appeared, such as the catastrophic fall in the groundwater level in the region of the Danube and the Tisza. It was therefore particularly interested in the preparation of reliable forecasts about climate change and its consequences, the adoption of effective international measures to eliminate climate change resulting from human activities and restore the environment to its original state, and the implementation of the necessary measures to combat the harmful consequences of inevitable changes in the climate. Those three questions called for wide-scale international co-operation, with the active participation of all competent organizations; special attention should be paid to regional co-operation among the countries of the Danube basin. Hungary supported the realization of the principles laid down in the Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Climate Conference and its programme of action, and offered to convey the results of the scientific research of its national institutions to international organizations.

31. Mrs. CHAN (Singapore) said that the issue of environment and development had moved to the forefront of United Nations concerns because of environmental degradation in both developed and developing countries. That made the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled for 1992, one of the most important conferences of the decade. In order to make progress in the preparatory work, the following considerations must be borne in mind: firstly, it

(Mrs. Chan, Singapore)

was important not to lose sight of the basic theme of the conference, namely, the nexus between environment and development; secondly, it was important to avoid an ideological confrontation between the North and the South, since the issue at stake was one of immense importance for all mankind; thirdly, the policy recommendations that would be made must be backed up by financial commitments so that they could be translated into practical programmes, and the developed countries must help the developing countries with financial assistance and the transfer of technology so that the latter could embark upon a course of environmentally sound and sustainable development.

32. Her delegation welcomed the progress made by the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. According to the Committee's report on its first substantive session (A/45/46), the General Assembly was expected to take action on five of the decisions adopted at the Nairobi meeting. It was hoped that the Second Committee would be able to endorse those decisions without reopening the discussion on the issues.

33. With regard to the protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind, her delegation welcomed the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and of the Second World Climate Conference. It was generally accepted that over the previous century, the world's mean surface temperature had risen by 0.5° C and that the sea level had risen by 10 to 15 centimetres. Despite scientific uncertainty concerning the build-up of greenhouse gases, the risk of global warming demanded immediate action. Her delegation therefore supported the recommendation made at the Second World Climate Conference that negotiations on a framework convention on climate change should begin without delay. Such a convention should be supplemented by a number of protocols, each dealing with one of the greenhouse gases. Any attempt to reduce carbon dioxide emissions must take into account the fact that those emissions varied considerably from one country to another. The industrialized countries were responsible for three quarters of carbon emissions, while the developing countries contributed only the remaining quarter. Given the disparities, it would be inequitable to freeze carbon emissions at existing levels for all countries or to propose that all countries should reduce their current emissions by 20 per cent by the year 2010. A fairer approach would be to require those countries which were responsible for a higher percentage of world carbon emissions to reduce them substantially. The developing countries must also attempt to reduce their emissions, but without hampering their economic development. Her delegation felt that the General Assembly should focus its efforts on adopting a resolution which would launch the negotiating process for a framework convention on climate change, instead of discussing the substantive issues to be covered by that convention.

34. Singapore was committed to the protection and preservation of the global environment. Its small size had compelled it to adopt an environmentally sensitive development policy which had enabled it to avoid much of the environmental degradation frequently associated with rapid urban and economic expansion and population growth. The country's recently established national council on the environment was a voluntary non-governmental organization comprising distinguished

(Mrs. Chan, Singapore)

personalities from the private and public sectors, which sought to help the Government to transform Singapore into a clean, green and environmentally conscious country. Singapore was also working closely with its partners in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to formulate practical measures to tackle environmental problems at both the regional and international levels. At their meeting in Malaysia in June, the Ministers of the Environment of ASEAN had pledged, inter alia, to harmonize environmental quality standards, to undertake research and development activities, to promote the use of non-polluting technologies and to include environmental factors in economic calculations. In that context, the Governments of the ASEAN countries had established six working groups, composed of senior officials, to examine regional environmental problems concerning the sea and the marine environment, nature conservation, transboundary pollution, environmental economics, environmental management, and public information and education on the environment. It should be possible, before the 1992 Conference, to achieve effective agreements such as the framework convention on climate change. The hopes of the entire world for the successful management of the imminent environmental crisis must not be disappointed.

35. Mr. BOECK (Austria) said that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would not be concerned solely with development and conservation or environmental technology; its main theme would be the relationship between man and society, on the one hand, and environmental resource systems, on the other. It was therefore necessary to approach that obvious but complex relationship in a balanced manner in order to put the Conference to its best possible use. General Assembly resolution 44/228 provided a sound basis and an adequate structure for the preparatory work for the Conference, and the first session of the Preparatory Committee had led to a useful exchange of ideas on ways of dealing with the concepts of environment and development. However, a more focused and structured approach should be adopted in order to compare the various analyses of that interdependence and to devise policies that would integrate those issues into a strategy of sustainable development.

36. In its report on the Nairobi session (A/45/46), the Preparatory Committee had highlighted the multitude of subjects involved. In that context, the role of the Secretariat, particularly in the preparation of reports and studies and the gathering of information, was essential to the success of the preparatory process. His delegation hoped that the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee would be a decisive step that would galvanize the activities and energies of the many participants in the process. It attached special importance to the contribution of non-governmental organizations and the participation of parliamentarians and members of the scientific and technological community. Furthermore, for a better understanding of environmental resource systems as production factors, it was necessary to secure the participation of representatives of such economic sectors as energy, industry, transportation and agriculture. In the context of the preparations for the Conference, his delegation supported the establishment of a working group on legal and institutional matters to deal with far-reaching legal implications, such as those outlined in paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 44/228. It therefore hoped that, in accordance with decision 1/26 of the

(Mr. Boeck, Austria)

Preparatory Committee, the Secretary-General of the Conference would submit to the next session of the Preparatory Committee precise recommendations concerning the establishment of such a working group, including its terms of reference.

37. On the issue of climate change, he felt that the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as well as the Conference Statement of the scientific and technical component of the Second World Climate Conference, demonstrated that mankind ran serious risks when emissions from human activities continued substantially to increase atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and that there existed a variety of options to reduce global warming. In view of the danger of irreversible damage to the environment, his delegation felt that environmental policies should anticipate, prevent and attack the causes of environmental degradation. Industrialized nations had a special responsibility to take measures to stabilize emissions of greenhouse gases that were not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent of 1988 levels by the year 2005, as recommended at the Toronto Conference, and to investigate the feasibility of achieving greater reductions. In its 1990 report on energy, the Austrian Government had adopted as a national target the recommended 20 per cent reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2005. Various studies on the attainment of that target were currently being conducted in Austria, including a study on the potential for energy conservation, which deserved particular attention. The scenarios presented in a preliminary report showed that it was possible to achieve the 20 per cent reduction through moderate measures to promote the rational use of energy. The negotiations on a framework convention on climate change should address the reduction of greenhouse gases, reforestation and forest conservation, as well as research and monitoring. Moreover, it was necessary to consider the specific needs of developing countries in the fields of research and monitoring, development and transfer of environmentally sound technology, adaptation measures to counter the adverse effects of climate change, and additional financial resources. His delegation strongly recommended that the negotiating body for the elaboration of a convention and protocols on climate change should be an intergovernmental negotiating committee under the auspices of UNEP and WMO. It also supported the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group, contained in the annex to document A/45/696. His delegation felt that, pursuant to resolution 44/207, the task of the General Assembly at its current session was to take a clear decision on a negotiating mechanism so that the negotiation process could begin as soon as possible.

38. Austria regarded the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Second World Climate Conference as an imperfect compromise. It regretted that no concrete commitments had been made concerning strategies for the reduction of greenhouse gases, energy efficiency, forest conservation, and the parallel negotiations on the protocols. However, it had joined in the consensus because it expected that the forthcoming negotiations would result in the definition of the necessary targets and programmes. The industrialized countries must help the developing countries to take measures concerning the environment, particularly by providing them with additional financial resources. His delegation therefore welcomed the idea of creating a global environmental facility, as proposed by the World Bank, UNDP and

(Mr. Boeck, Austria)

UNEP. That mechanism would focus on guarding against the depletion of the ozone layer and global warming. Austria would be prepared to make an appropriate contribution to that facility when it was established.

39. Mr. WON (Observer for the Republic of Korea) said that, since the resolution on the environment adopted by the General Assembly in 1987, the world community had become aware of the magnitude of environmental degradation. That awareness had given rise to the concept of environmentally sound and sustainable development, a concept difficult to put into practice, particularly for developing countries facing grave economic difficulties.

40. His Government attached great importance to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, on account of the major issues it would deal with, and considered that all nations, developed and developing, must participate fully in the preparatory process for that meeting. Establishment of the bases for mutual understanding and earnest dialogue from the outset would ensure unified action to deal with protection of the environment.

41. The Conference should be the starting point on the road to global sustainable development. Environmental concerns should not, however, be used to inhibit the growth potential of the developing countries. Since there was a consensus on the need to protect the environment, due consideration should be given to the needs of developing countries by granting them financial resources and transferring environmentally sound technologies to them on preferential terms. It was to be hoped that the 1992 Conference would be of value in that regard.

42. With regard to the Second World Climate Conference, his delegation believed that support and encouragement should continue to be given to the activities of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, so as to pinpoint the problems and formulate strategies at an early date. In view of their capabilities and the responsibility they bore in that regard, the industrialized countries should be the first to act.

43. The negotiations on a framework convention on climate change were to commence shortly. It was to be hoped that the fullest possible participation would be secured, and that the instrument would contain a commitment to provide developing countries with additional financial resources and technology which would enable them to participate in the concerted effort being made in that field.

44. His Government accorded high priority to protection of the environment. It had taken a number of initiatives to that end, including, on the legislative side, the enactment of a framework law intended to incorporate the environment into development policy. At the institutional level, the Environment Administration had become a ministry and the National Environmental Preservation Committee had been considerably strengthened and was now presided over by the Prime Minister. Eager to participate actively in the 1992 Conference, his country had also established a working group of experts to produce recommendations and guidelines for the preparation of a national report.

(Mr. Won, Observer, Korea)

45. With regard to the problem of driftnet fishing, his delegation shared the view expressed by the Japanese delegation, that that type of fishing did not threaten the effective conservation of resources if appropriate conservation and management measures were taken.

46. In view of the importance of the question, his country had established a scientific observer programme with the United States of America, and had agreed with Canada to exchange data and information on the question. It would continue to participate in the scientific research being done on the subject.

47. Mr. SILALAHI (Indonesia) said that his country was acutely conscious of the vulnerability of the world's ecosystem and of the threats that its destruction would pose to development. It thus attached great importance to the preparations for the Conference on Environment and Development. Responsibility for restoring the environment must be equitably shared among all nations, taking into account the disparities between developed and developing countries and the fact that the latter should not be penalized for the excesses of the former. Rather, the linkages between environmental concerns and the legitimate development needs of developing countries should be recognized.

48. The Preparatory Committee for the Conference had recently held its first substantive session in Nairobi, at which it had made recommendations that would make it possible to speed up the preparations, and had stressed the magnitude of the problem, alerting the international community to the seriousness of the crisis. Nevertheless, while his delegation supported the decisions taken at the session, it regretted the lack of emphasis on the development dimension. No one disputed the importance of such issues as ozone layer depletion, climate change, desertification or deforestation, but they needed to be considered in the overall context of environmentally sound development. The close relationship between the environment and development and between poverty and environmental degradation must be studied in greater depth.

49. In a world of rapidly increasing interdependence between nations and between problems, there was a need to find integrated strategies that would prevent further degradation of the environment and at the same time promote sustainable and environmentally sound development. In the current post-cold-war period, it was to be hoped that the growing international co-operation for the protection of the environment would make it possible to overcome all the difficulties. In any negotiations on the elaboration of an international legal instrument for the enhancement of the environment, the development of the developing countries should be fully taken into account.

50. Indonesia attached great importance to the concept of environmentally sound development, and conceived its own development in terms of a balanced approach, reconciling the satisfaction of material needs and the quality of life. Its natural resources were divided into two categories: those that must be protected, and would therefore remain unexploited, and those that must be exploited for development purposes. Among the resources to be preserved was the tropical rain

(Mr. Silalahi, Indonesia)

forest, which had been recognized as the world's biologically richest ecosystem. Recognizing the importance of that resource to its economy, the Government was determined to manage its tropical forests rationally, for the benefit of present and future generations, even if that policy called for sacrifices, for it had simultaneously to strive to meet the increasing needs of a growing population. It was thus imperative that the world community should help it to meet those needs and to pursue its environmentally oriented policy.

51. On the alarming question of climate change and global warming, his delegation welcomed the results of the recent Second World Climate Conference. The build-up of billions of tons of greenhouse gases could have devastating effects upon the climate and pose a direct threat to life on the planet. Climate change was now recognized as an environmental problem whose potential consequences for mankind could be extremely serious; the Conference had thus rightly stressed the need for further scientific research and monitoring programmes, in search of innovative solutions.

52. Bearing in mind the need to protect the environment while ensuring sustainable development, the 1992 United Nations Conference must strongly reflect the interdependence between development issues and environmental concerns, which were mutually reinforcing. It must also encourage active co-operation between developed and developing countries.

53. Mr. ADEKUOYE (Nigeria) said that it was very difficult to reconcile the need for sustained or accelerated development with the maintenance of a healthy environment in all countries. As a result of the developed countries' patterns of production and consumption and the unhealthy exploitation of their natural resources by the developing countries, mankind now faced a serious problem: how to arrest and reverse the process of degradation of the environment that was threatening life-sustaining systems. Greater international co-operation was needed in order to solve that problem.

54. Dramatic improvements in the international political climate opened up the prospect of a world united in a common endeavour to preserve a healthy environment and to guarantee a common security for present and future generations. The end to the conflicts should make it possible to release resources that would be devoted to protection of the environment.

55. The United Nations system must be in the forefront of that process and co-ordinate the efforts of the international community. In that context, the Conference on Environment and Development should enable it to demonstrate that it was capable of dealing effectively with the problems, transcending all differences, particularly between more developed and less developed countries.

56. Developing countries were extremely vulnerable to environmental degradation, because they were poorly equipped both financially and technologically to combat the negative impact of such factors as climate change, depletion of the ozone layer, transboundary pollution, or dumping of toxic waste. In addition, some

(Mr. Adekuoye, Nigeria)

cultivation systems and traditional practices also caused environmental degradation in many developing countries, contributing to soil erosion, deforestation and desertification (shifting and fallow cultivation methods, excessive use of wood fuel, overuse of forests, for example). Developed countries must promote ecologically sound policies to ensure sustainable development both for themselves and for developing countries.

57. For example, there was an urgent need for all countries to establish effective standards for disposal of toxic waste. The transboundary movement of such waste must also be rigorously regulated, and it must not be sent to countries technologically incapable of safely disposing of it. In that context, his Government had recently established the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. It also placed increasing importance on combating desertification, and additional resources had been allocated for reforestation projects. Nigeria's coastal regions had suffered from pollution caused by oil prospecting, and oil pollution had depleted living marine resources. Some areas had suffered flooding after sudden increases in sea level. The Government was taking vigorous measures to address those problems but, because of the high cost, it had requested assistance from the competent United Nations agencies and the international community.

58. The 1990s should be a decade of international co-operation in development and environmental protection. That co-operation should, however, respect national goals and priorities and take into account the efforts of States to protect their environment.

59. In developing countries, urgent measures for natural resource conservation were required. Development assistance and international economic co-operation should address that aspect of the problem, which so far had been neglected and which affected the least developed countries in particular.

60. Over the past 10 years, the gap between developed and developing countries had widened greatly. Because of inequities in international economic relations, developing countries had suffered a decrease in the resources available to devote to the environment. That impoverishment was at the root of the increase in environmental degradation. There was an urgent need, therefore, to create a positive synthesis between economic and environmental imperatives, and to provide additional financial and managerial resources to developing countries.

61. Regional co-operation organizations gave higher priority to environmental problems. For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) currently incorporated into its programmes measures to promote environmentally sound development. With regard to bilateral co-operation, Niger and Nigeria had made a joint request for external assistance for anti-desertification projects.

62. The 1992 Conference should recognize the need to elaborate on a wide variety of environmental policies, particularly concerning drought and desertification control, preservation of tropical rain forests, protection of certain species on the brink of extinction, and conservation of biological diversity. Environmental

(Mr. Adekuoye, Nigeria)

protection activities must be intensified at all levels. Nigeria welcomed the solidarity demonstrated by all members of the international community in the search for solutions to environmental problems.

63. Ms. DUEÑAS de WHIST (Fcuador) said that environmental problems, which threatened the well-being of mankind, had for some time been the subject of countless analyses, studies and reports from the most diverse sources. The environment had become a fashionable topic. She wondered how many trees had been felled to produce the paper needed to publish all that literature.

64. The difficulty with development was that it must be lasting, or, in the words of the Brundtland report, a process of change ensuring harmony between exploitation of resources, direction of investments, orientation of technological progress and institutional change, increasing the present and future potential in order to meet the needs and aspirations of mankind.

65. Environmental degradation was an evil which must be detected and treated in time, before it became irreversible. The first diagnosis dated back to the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Since then, it had been amply demonstrated that sustainable development must be based on conservation and on the protection of nature, and its non-renewable resources, including those resources believed to be inexhaustible such as air, water and even climate.

66. Ennvironmental damage was becoming an irreversible process, and that had led the deputy secretary of the Smithsonian Institute to say that the battle for the environment would be won or lost during the 1990s. Since the 1972 Conference, many theoretical and practical principles had been established in regard to environmental protection, but for the most part they had never been applied at the local or regional level, not to mention the global level. For that reason, the international community must urgently take the measures required. Inaction would be tantamount to deliberately causing a catastrophe of unimaginable scope.

67. The relationship between man and nature had been studied sufficiently already, and it was time for action. The United Nations had an exceptional responsibility in that area; furthermore, its mandate was sufficiently broad to allow it to take the lead. The representative of Bolivia had stressed that fact when he had spoken on behalf of the Group of 77; the delegation of Ecuador fully supported his statement.

68. The best way to resolve serious environmental problems in developing countries was through appropriate execution of integrated economic and social development plans which respected the environment without limiting the potential of various population sectors. Any error could have serious consequences: erosion was an example.

69. Three basic factors were needed for short-term solutions. It was clear that the first two, knowledge and means of action, already existed, and she hoped that the third, collective and individual commitment, existed as well. In common with

(Ms. Dueñas de Whist, Ecuador)

the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations had fundamental responsibility for rapid implementation of solutions in that area and for starting the process towards implementation.

70. Mr. SEPELAK (Czechoslovakia) said that the world community was fully aware that if solutions were not found rapidly to environmental problems, the very existence of mankind would be threatened.

71. In view of the devastation caused by the former, totalitarian régime, his Government had made rehabilitation of the environment a priority. During the transition period to a market economy, the economic reforms introduced took into account the internationally accepted concept of sustainable and ecologically sound development.

72. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in 1972 at Stockholm, had attempted to define global problems relating to the environment; the Conference on Environment and Development planned for 1992 would have to examine practical proposals for solutions to those problems. Considering the growing threat of an ecological catastrophe, it was imperative that the meeting should mark the beginning of joint action by the international community.

73. His delegation evaluated with a certain degree of optimism the conclusions of the recent Bergen regional conference regarding the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, and the conclusions of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on Environment and Development at the substantive session recently held at Nairobi. At the Conference, participants should make specific commitments to the environment, taking into account the capabilities of the developed countries and the needs of the developing world. The Preparatory Committee had taken a first step in that direction, proposing three objectives for the Conference: issuance of an Earth charter as a statement of commitment to action to promote environmental protection and sustainable development; elaboration of a programme of action for the 1990s and the twenty-first century; and drafting of conventions on climate and biological diversity.

74. The debate, however, indicated that it would not be possible to attain the objectives of the Conference without prior clarification of general principles and fundamental concepts. While there was a common understanding that the world environment could be preserved through ecologically sound development, the very definitions of that concept and of other basic principles, such as accurate evaluation of environmental risks or the notion of critical loads, were still far from being universally agreed. At the same time, the preparatory work was vital for the drafting of the above-mentioned conventions.

75. For that purpose, Czechoslovakia advocated the establishment of a third working group, on legal and institutional questions, which would also be entrusted with elaborating the basic principles concerned. It was ready to take the initiative in such work. It also hoped to make a concrete contribution to the elaboration of the concept of the environmental aspects of security, conscious as it was of the growing identity of views on that issue.

(Mr. Sepelak, Czechoslovakia)

76. At Nairobi, the Preparatory Committee had also rightly pointed to another significant component of the action to be taken in support of sustainable development, namely, ecological education. Democratic institutions and society as a whole - and especially young people - must be involved in that process. For that purpose, Czechoslovakia had proposed the establishment of an "Ecological Academy", which might be a part of the World Ecological Academy to be established in Switzerland in accordance with the proposal of UNEP.

77. The Preparatory Committee had an important role to play in preparing for the Conference, whose success would largely depend on the Committee's efforts. Non-governmental organizations should also participate actively in the process and contribute to the implementation of specific measures in that field. It was also essential to establish constructive and effective co-operation between the Committee, UNEP and the Secretariat, and also between the United Nations system, national Governments and independent sectors.

78. The complexity of the documents to be prepared pursuant to resolution 44/228 also necessitated a strengthening of the mechanisms and institutions involved in management of the environment, in order to enable them to examine systematically all issues pertaining to the environment, including the linkage with development. In particular, the effectiveness of UNEP as a catalyst and co-ordinator of system-wide activities relating to the environment must be enhanced.

79. The question of protection of global climate rightly occupied a prominent place in the cluster of issues under consideration. It was fortunate that deliberations in that sphere were intensifying, and that there was recognition of the need to develop co-operation between developed and developing countries in order to halt negative trends which were liable to have serious consequences for the global environment. Czechoslovakia's accession to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was a concrete example of its positive approach to the solution of that issue.

80. The report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the results of the second special session of the UNEP Governing Council and the recent World Climate Conference had provided new information and contributed to the practical preparation of the framework convention on that subject.

81. His country reaffirmed that it would exert its best efforts at the regional and international levels in order to contribute to the preservation of the environment.

82. Mr. HASSAN (Pakistan) noted that the international community was becoming increasingly aware of the devastating effects on life-support systems caused by deterioration of the environment, and of the fact that, to halt that process, concerted action was required.

83. General Assembly resolution 44/228 listed the basic environmental issues to be addressed and comprehensively laid down the objectives of the 1992 Conference.

(Mr. Hassan, Pakistan)

Countries must commit themselves to protection and enhancement of the environment through national action and international co-operation. By joining the consensus on the resolution, his country had undertaken to contribute to the implementation of its objectives.

84. His delegation supported the efforts being made to implement the decisions and resolutions recently adopted by the Governing Council of UNEP, and welcomed the results of the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, which were also contributing to the implementation of resolution 44/228.

85. In adopting the new International Development Strategy, the international community had recognized that the process of environmental degradation was closely linked to economic development. Poverty aggravated the problems of deforestation and desertification, thus proving that degradation of the environment could not be discussed in isolation; any strategy on the environment must take into account the development process. The problem was complex, and required the co-operation of the international community. The developed countries, as the major source of pollution, bore the primary responsibility in that field. However, the developing countries must participate fully in the debate and must decide on their own strategies for confronting the problem.

86. The developing countries must be given the wherewithal to anticipate and address environmental threats and emergencies; the technological means available to them were outdated. The transfer of technology must therefore be accelerated in order to assist them in combating pollution, and particularly industrial pollution. The co-operation of the developed countries in that field would facilitate the introduction of a global strategy to halt deterioration of the environment.

87. His delegation supported the efforts of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, whose first report offered useful information on the possible elements to be included in the convention on climate change. It was, however, of the utmost importance to enable the developing countries to participate fully in the deliberations of the Panel.

88. Pakistan faced the problems of desertification, waterlogging and salinity, soil degradation and water-borne diseases. His Government had taken concrete steps which indicated its concern, and it intended to prepare a comprehensive environmental-protection policy. It had introduced a national conservation strategy with the aim of maintaining essential ecological processes and life-support systems, and of preserving biological diversity.

89. The preparatory process for the 1992 Conference should be fully consonant with the letter and spirit of resolution 44/228. By maintaining that process within the limits established by the resolution, a contribution would be made to the success of that important meeting.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
43rd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 14 November 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PAPADATOS	(Greece)
later:	Mr. GIANELLI (Vice-Chairman)	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. AMAZIANE (Vice-Chairman)	(Morroco)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

Draft resolution on the World Decade for Cultural Development (A/C.2/45/L.33)

1. Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77, and drew attention, in particular, to paragraphs 2, 4 and 6. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 79: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(a) INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT DECADE (1991-2000) (continued)

(d) FOOD PROBLEMS (continued)

(e) NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY (continued)

(f) DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENERGY RESOURCES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued)

Draft resolution on the Unification of Yemen (A/C.2/45/L.35)

2. Mr. ORTIZ (Bolivia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77.

Draft resolution on the report of the Committee on the development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy (A/C.2/45/L.37)

3. Mr. ORTIZ (Bolivia), introduced draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77.

Draft resolution on Development of the energy resources of developing countries (A/C.2/45/L.38)

4. Mr. ORTIZ (Bolivia), introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on Food and agricultural problems (A/C.2/45/L.40)

5. Mr. ORTIZ (Bolivia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77, and drew attention to the following amendments. The word "Fund" at the end of paragraph 19, should be replaced by the words "International Fund for Agricultural Development". In the English text, the word "stated" in the penultimate line of paragraph 11 should be changed to "stressed". He expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 82: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued)

Draft resolution on International co-operation for the eradication of poverty in the developing countries (A/C.2/45/L.41)

6. Mr. ORTIZ (Bolivia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and drew particular attention to the final paragraph.

AGENDA ITEM 86: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

Draft resolution on the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America (A/C.2/45/L.34)

7. Mr. MAYORGA (Nicaragua), introducing the draft resolution, said that recent favourable developments had made the prospects for achieving lasting peace in Central America much more promising. At their June 1990 summit meeting in Antigua, Guatemala, the Central American Presidents had reiterated that peace was not possible without development and had stressed the importance of the guidelines contained in the Central American Economic Plan of Action. The Special Plan was crucial to the implementation of that Plan of Action. In recent months, significant steps had been taken to define regional development policies, but, for the most part, improvements in the economic and social situation were not yet visible. Assistance programmes provided for by the Special Plan must be accelerated and strengthened in order to achieve the genuine potential for regional integration.

8. The report of the Secretary-General on the Special Plan (A/45/622) provided a balanced assessment of its implementation. His findings with respect to the macro-economic framework confirmed that the economic crisis which had necessitated the Special Plan continued to hamper the region's growth. The problems to be dealt with included the contraction of the Central American Common Market, capital flight, the exodus of qualified human resources, shrinking investments and the large number of refugees and displaced persons.

9. Overall, the 1980s had been a period of acute economic recession in Central America and countries had been forced to reduce their imports of essential goods for development and to abandon certain social programmes as part of difficult adjustment processes. A sharp decline in investment and productive capacity had prevented most Central American countries from resuming a normal rate of growth and development and meeting the basic needs of their populations. Continued promotion of the objectives of the Special Plan was vital to the political transformation and economic reconstruction of Central America. The General Assembly must reaffirm the mandate of the Special Plan in order to ensure the continuity of programmes and projects already under way and an effective allocation of resources to the Central American countries.

(Mr. Mayorga, Nicaragua)

10. At the thirty-seventh session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, the Central American Governments had requested of $US 20 million in special programme resources in order to maintain current activities under the Special Plan and initiate new ones in the fifth programming cycle. That request had been unanimously endorsed by the Latin American and Caribbean countries and a number of donor countries. The final decision of the Governing Council of UNDP would be taken in February 1991. Official and private financial flows to Central America must be strengthened urgently in order to implement the Special Plan. It was hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 79: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued) (A/45/25, 350, 663 and 666)

AGENDA ITEM 80: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/45/46, 177, 303, 313, A/45/336-S/21385, A/45/345, 361, 584, A/45/598-S/28154, A/45/666)

AGENDA ITEM 81: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/45/177, 303, 361, A/45/598-S/21854, A/45/666, 696 and Add.1)

11. Mr. EFTYCHIOU (Cyprus) said that the international community had come to realize it would have to change its ways in order to avoid threats to the continuation of life itself. The business like approach which characterized the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was commendable. By adopting General Assembly resolution 44/228, the international community had stressed that all nations must fulfil their responsibilities with respect to the environment and seek to eliminate the root causes of environmental damage. That resolution also embodied an understanding of the linkage between environment and development and the negative effects of unsustainable production and consumption patterns in the developed countries. Measures must be taken urgently on what might be considered traditional environmental issues, including the transfer of technology on concessional or preferential terms and the provision of new and additional financial resources. The Conference should result in concrete action to avert the disaster which would otherwise surely come.

12. Cyprus had participated actively in regional and sectoral projects and had contributed to various environmental funds. With other Mediterranean countries, it had participated in the UNEP-assisted Mediterranean Action Plan and had signed the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution. The Mediterranean Action Plan, through its Blue Project, addressed problems affecting the high seas and land resources. Cyprus had also adopted a number of laws and policies aimed at safeguarding rare animal species and their habitats.

13. His delegation believed strongly that in the context of the preparatory process for the Conference, the establishment of working group III should be expedited. The functions of existing institutions must be reviewed and the positive role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must be taken into account.

(Mr. Eftychiou, Cyprus)

It would also be important to make full use of the existing United Nations system and regional inputs. The Conference must be action-oriented and lead to commitments based on the recognition that development and environment must go hand in hand.

14. Mr. NINOV (Bulgaria) said that both individual States and the international community must appraise the current state of the environment realistically in order to determine future activities and establish a basis for the elaboration of international legal instruments and standards. Realistic international co-operation and acceptance of responsibilities would be of genuine value to States in the elaboration of national strategies. The development and transfer of environmentally safe technologies were of particular importance.

15. The profound transformations taking place in Bulgaria had reinforced efforts to ensure environmentally sound development. Bulgaria's serious environmental problems had become the concern not only of government agencies but also of social movements and organizations, whose input was strongly encouraged. Aware of the dangers of global warming and other threats to the environment, Bulgaria supported the international community in its efforts to elaborate a convention in that area. His delegation was encouraged by the results of the Second World Climate Conference. The measures and standards contained in a convention on climate change must be realistically geared to the potential of its States parties. Scientific capacity in forecasting climate changes must be strengthened at the national, international and regional levels. Attention must also be devoted on a priority basis to the negative effects of polluting emissions and to forest preservation. Bulgaria was currently outlining measures in those areas in compliance with the Sofia Protocol to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution.

16. The magnitude of ecological problems underscored the need to strengthen the role of UNEP and its Governing Council. His delegation supported the recommendations and decisions adopted at the latter's second special session, particularly with regard to strengthening the Council's co-ordinating role and increasing contributions to the Programme's funds. The recent joint statement by UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank formed a sound basis for concerted action to preserve the environment. His delegation also supported the establishment of a United Nations Centre for Emergency Environmental Assistance and an ecological disaster early warning system.

17. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said that recent discussions had revealed the complex nexus between environment and development, addressing such elements as responsibility, need for appropriate legal instruments, additionality of resources, transfer of information and technology, and a supportive international environment. However, mere enumeration of the problems was not sufficient: priorities must also be established. If the environmental malaise afflicting the planet was to be addressed effectively, it was essential to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach; and the reports requested by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development must reflect that fundamental need. National reports would be crucial to the next phase of the

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

preparatory work, and every effort should be made to ensure that they were ready for consideration in good time. His delegation was pleased that the Secretariat planned to assist national authorities in preparation of such reports.

18. The Conference secretariat must not confine itself to the technical and organizational aspects of the preparations. Greater interaction between secretariat, delegations and Member States was needed, and the Conference Liaison Office in New York must play a vigorous role in discharging that responsibility. More briefings such as the one held in New York earlier that year by the Secretary-General of the Conference would be particularly helpful.

19. The need for resources to meet the cost of participation by delegations from the least developed countries was real and pressing and he urged the Secretary-General to do everything possible to mobilize sufficient resources for that purpose. At its current session, the General Assembly must also act upon the Preparatory Committee's decision regarding the role of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process for the Conference.

20. At its forty-fifth session the General Assembly would also have to decide on the scope and modalities of a framework convention on climate change. His delegation appreciated the significant work already done on the convention by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and hoped that negotiations on the convention could begin without further delay, so that it could be ready for adoption during the Conference. His delegation shared the view that the convention should be finalized through a single, open and fully transparent negotiating process undertaken under the auspices of the General Assembly. The bureau of the negotiating body should reflect a proper geographical representation, and a balance of interests and concerns. While addressing the main problems in all their interrelatedness, the convention must also meet the special needs of the developing countries.

21. Meetings of the negotiating body for the convention should, if possible, not overlap with those of the Preparatory Committee and its main decisions should incorporate contributions received from that Committee and from UNEP, WMO and other relevant bodies. A closer interaction between the proposed negotiating body and those other institutions would clearly be needed. Decision 1/11 of the Preparatory Committee deserved particular attention in that context.

22. It had also been suggested that, in order to ensure adequate participation of the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, a special trust fund should be constituted. His delegation had fully endorsed that recommendation, and hoped that it would be duly reflected in the relevant decision of the General Assembly.

23. Mr. Gianelli (Uruguay), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

24. Mr. DINU (Romania) said that since none of the current environmental challenges could be met unless the world embarked on a new era of co-operation and agreement, it was heartening to note the spirit of consensus that had prevailed at the recent sessions of the UNEP Governing Council and in the Preparatory Committee.

25. Romania set great store by strict adherence to resolution 44/228 as the key to the success of the forthcoming Conference. The international community must be required to observe new environmental standards. By the same token, however, some developing countries would require assistance in adapting to those standards and integrating environmental considerations into their development process.

26. It was appropriate to consider how systems of national accounts could best reflect environmental factors, further developing the concept of "depreciation of natural capital" and indicators to evaluate related costs, thereby reconciling economic progress with preservation of the environment. His country hoped to be assisted in that endeavour, not merely for its own benefit, but for that of the world community as a whole. The proposed World Bank/UNEP/UNDP Global Environmental Facility represented a further valuable initiative in that regard.

27. The decisions just taken by the Preparatory Committee were only a beginning. His delegation looked forward to studying the reports requested from the Secretary-General of the Conference, especially those on technology transfer and financial resources. It welcomed the arrangements being made in response to States' requests for assistance in preparing national reports. It also favoured a substantive presence of non-governmental organizations in both the preparatory process and the Conference itself, and hoped that it would be possible to accommodate differing opinions on the status of those non-governmental organizations invited to participate.

28. His delegation regarded the Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Climate Conference as a pioneering document, whose substance was strengthened by the commitment of some of the world's largest producers of polluting gases to cut back their production. While that operation would be costly, the enormous long-term economic opportunities offered by environmentally sound policies could not be overlooked. The future mandate of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change should thus be based on the outcome of the negotiations between Governments on the framework convention on climate change.

29. Mr. RYSINSKI (Poland) said that the preservation of civilization hinged increasingly on mankind's ability to protect the environment. It was thus justifiable to speak of an ecological imperative in development. Ecological disasters and overwhelming environmental pollution had helped the international community to understand that it was in fact an organic unity. Pollution seldom respected national boundaries: the sufferings of Polish people affected by the Chernobyl accident provided a painful lesson in that regard. Consequently, the concept of interdependence had become a personalized, almost palpable reality.

30. Respect for environmental considerations was leading to fundamental adjustments in social and political attitudes, entailing a comprehensive transition

(Mr. Rysinski, Poland)

towards accountability and co-operation. In practical terms, the objectives must be to secure transfer of environmentally sound technologies, to improve generation and distribution of resources for environmental protection, and to promote environmentally sound economic management and co-operation at all levels.

31. The international community was concentrating its attention on the interlinkage between environment and development. Sustainability of development, or, to put it differently, environmentally sound development, was not only theoretically viable, but also a practical means of accelerating the pace of environmental change, and of establishing a new global order governed by respect for the rule of the laws of nature, for rationality and equity.

32. Poland recognized the key role played by the Preparatory Committee as a focal point for activities in that field. The Committee's work would benefit from early establishment of its Working Group III, on legal, institutional and all related matters. Poland also supported requests for the strengthening of UNEP and recognized the need to draw more fully on the potential of non-governmental organizations and other sources in discussing the issues on the Conference's agenda.

33. His delegation reaffirmed the relevance of regional co-operation in ensuring protection of the environment. In that spirit it had participated in the Bergen Conference on Sustainable Development and in follow-up activity to the Conference.

34. Since the Assembly's fortieth session, Poland had consistently stressed the relevance of facilitated access to and transfer of technology for the protection of the environment. The scale of such technology flows was one of the best measures of the extent to which the principle of sustainable development could become a reality. The problem could not be solved by intricate systems of legal provisions alone. By sharing their knowledge with others, more advanced countries could not only assist others, but could help themselves as well. International solidarity would assure a ready return on outlays, for example, through schemes of foreign ecological investment and debt-for-nature swaps. Furthermore, environmental co-operation might well pave the way for the establishment of closer ties in other fields.

35. Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta) said that his Government adhered firmly to the view that the present generation had a moral obligation to preserve an environment that could sustain life for future generations. Effective solutions to global environmental problems must be based on global co-operation, and on sound scientific knowledge. More needed to be done to educate the public on environmental problems. Non-governmental organizations had played a very important role in that regard, and his Government supported all efforts aimed at ensuring that they could make an appropriate contribution to the work of the Preparatory Committee and to the Conference itself.

36. The difficulties faced by developing countries in dealing with environmental problems had been identified and were now well understood. It was clear that such

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

countries would be unable to co-operate effectively in preserving the environment unless they had access to up-to-date, environmentally sound technologies. Malta applauded the statement contained in paragraph 23 of the Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Climate Conference adopted by consensus in Geneva the previous week, and welcomed the undertaking by representatives of the European community, the Nordic countries, and other industrialized countries to play their part in such transfers.

37. Malta had played a very important role in bringing to the fore what was probably the most serious environmental concern humanity had ever had to face, namely, the problem of climate change. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 43/53, recognizing climate change as a common concern of mankind, had focused world attention on the problems of global warming and climate change. The first assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) constituted a milestone in the new field of environmental diplomacy. It placed the problem in its proper scientific perspective, underscored its complexity, and indicated possible response strategies. The report also listed possible elements for inclusion in a framework convention on climate. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the governing bodies of both UNEP and WMO had decided that IPCC should continue to exist. Malta strongly supported that decision, and looked forward to seeing IPCC play an important role in the negotiating process for a climate convention.

38. The Ministerial Declaration called for negotiations on a framework convention on climate change to begin without delay, after a decision to be taken by the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly recommending ways, means and modalities for further pursuing those negotiations. With regard to the organizational structure for the negotiations, Malta supported the recommendations approved at the September meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of government representatives. At the same time, it was firmly of the view that the negotiating process should be undertaken under the auspices of the General Assembly, with both UNEP and WMO continuing to play a leading role.

39. At the Second World Climate Conference the Prime Minister of Malta had stressed that the commitment required for the preservation of climate would probably constitute the greatest challenge ever to have faced humanity. That commitment called for willingness on the part of all countries to undertake co-operation on a scale hitherto unknown.

40. Mr. DEO (India) said that the only way developing countries would be able to join in international action to protect the environment was if they were provided with adequate additional financial resources for that purpose. At the same time, the imposition of "ecological conditionalities" should be avoided, since the developing countries could be relied upon to display responsibility in their environmental policies even if they sometimes lacked the means of assessing or combating environmental damage.

(Mr. Deo, India)

41. Environmental protection in many areas presupposed extensive technological change. However, developing countries were in no position to jettison older technologies which they had acquired at great cost and acquire new ones. In that regard, the preferential and concessional transfer of technology to developing countries could play a vital role in global co-operation. Any environmental protection mechanism should provide for trust funds to facilitate the participation of developing countries.

42. Environmental protection was not merely a policing or regulatory exercise; it was also an attempt to build up national and international capacity to meet the challenge. Once a country had the capacity to meet the ecological challenge, its commitment to that cause was strengthened. The adoption of strict environmental regulations when many countries still lacked the capacity to enforce them, was unrealistic. The regulatory aspect of environmental protection should therefore be tempered by supportive and/or compensatory measures.

43. The focus on global environmental concerns should not be at the expense of other vital environmental concerns such as soil degradation, deforestation and desertification. Measures at the international level for the protection and enhancement of the environment must take full account of the current imbalances in global patterns of production and consumption, and the responsibility for halting, reducing and eliminating global environmental damage must be borne by the countries which caused such damage.

44. At its current session, the General Assembly would have to make recommendations on ways of conducting negotiations on a framework convention on climate change. The Ad Hoc Working Group of Government Representatives which had met at Geneva from 24 to 26 September had proposed the convening of a "Specialized Conference for the Negotiation of a Framework Convention on Climate Change", with a Secretary-General appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General. Given the magnitude of the problem and the way in which it had to be addressed, India believed that agreement should be reached on the convening of such a conference.

45. Thought was already being given to the institutional framework for what might be called a new generation of ecological activism. The institutionalization of environmental protection required a high degree of global concurrence, which would be reached only when all countries were convinced of their stake in the endeavour. The Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the Conference itself would establish mandates in that regard.

46. The legal bases for environmental protection would evolve as negotiations in each area concerned progressed. The international community had already gained considerable experience from the adoption of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Legally binding instruments deserved universal commitment, and his delegation supported the Preparatory Committee's decision to consider the establishment of a third working group to deal with legal, institutional and other matters. Cross-sectoral issues such as funding

(Mr. Deo, India)

and technology transfer and co-ordination within the Preparatory Committee were also important.

47. Non-governmental organizations should also have an opportunity to make contributions to the work of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference. His delegation was in favour of a fair balance between non-governmental organizations with an environmental focus and those with a development focus and the equitable representation of organizations from the developing and the developed world.

48. Mr. MOORE (United States of America) said that the first assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identified a range of possible response strategies and the key elements to be considered for inclusion in the framework convention on climate change. President Bush had proposed that the United States should act as host for the first round of negotiations on the convention. In the light of its offer, the United States was naturally very concerned that the negotiation process should be clear, fair, open and efficient.

49. In preparation for the negotiations, representatives of over 70 Governments had met two months earlier at Geneva and adopted 20 consensus recommendations on the subject. All of those recommendations should be endorsed by the General Assembly at its current session. In order to facilitate timely and effective negotiations, there should be a single negotiating body, and negotiators should establish a balanced and representative bureau, clear rules of procedure which provided for consensus decision-making and a feasible and timely schedule for the negotiations. The negotiation secretariat should be formed at Geneva with the assistance of WMO and UNEP, and should work closely with the IPCC secretariat and other United Nations and international bodies concerned with climate change. In order to build on the progress achieved to date, the first assessment report of IPCC, including the list of possible elements for inclusion in the framework convention, should serve as the starting point for the discussions. The Intergovernmental Panel itself should provide the scientific and technical advice needed by the negotiators.

50. The first substantive meeting of the Preparatory Committee had requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to provide numerous reports for the next session at Geneva. The Conference secretariat should complete the reports needed for the next meeting in order to encourage the Preparatory Committee to focus on key issues, and should reschedule the remaining reports for an appropriate stage in the preparatory process.

51. The arrangements for participation of non-governmental organizations in the Preparatory Committee's recent meeting provided an equitable procedure for broad participation by relevant non-governmental organizations, which would include those concerned with environmental, commercial, industrial and scientific issues. Such guidelines should be adopted for subsequent meetings of the Preparatory Committee.

52. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/225, large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing had been discontinued in the South Pacific. The United States

(Mr. Moore, United States)

Government had banned the use of driftnets within its exclusive economic zone and, at a recent meeting with the leaders of South Pacific nations, President Bush had announced that the United States would sign the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Drift Nets in the South Pacific, also called the Wellington Convention.

53. Mr. KING (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the environment crisis must be addressed at the national, regional and global levels through concrete programmes and initiatives. The industrialized countries should make available to the developing countries substantial amounts of new resources and clean technology. At the national level, Trinidad and Tobago had formulated plans as part of a comprehensive national conservation strategy, which would be implemented as part of the national policy. At the subregional and regional levels, Trinidad and Tobago had been active in various forums and agreement had been reached the previous year, at a ministerial conference of the Caribbean Community, on institutional arrangements for consultation and co-ordination of environmental issues. Her country had just hosted a ministerial meeting on the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, which had resulted in the adoption of an action plan for the environment in that region.

54. At their recent meeting in Port-of-Spain, the Commonwealth Finance Ministers had emphasized that the protection of the environment was a global problem which required global solutions, and that the industrialized countries had a special responsibility to help meet the costs of environmental protection. The Ministers had also considered the importance of improved access and adoption of environmentally benign technology for halting the degradation of the environment, and had suggested that mechanisms should be established for the transfer of such technology to developing countries on concessional terms.

55. The Secretary-General's report on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing (A/45/663) had succeeded in consolidating existing legislation on the matter and bringing the gravity of the problem into clear focus.

56. His delegation welcomed the Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Climate Conference, and hoped that the recommendations contained in that Declaration would be implemented for the benefit of mankind. Many of those recommendations should be at the centre of any effective strategy to preserve and enhance the environment. Trinidad and Tobago also supported the call for a framework convention on climate change.

57. The report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (A/45/46), provided a clear picture of the magnitude of the task assigned to the preparatory process.

58. The prospect of global warming and sea-level rise were of critical concern to small island States, which had not contributed in any significant way to the creation of such problems. The emergence of an alliance of small island States to

(Mr. King, Trinidad and Tobago)

co-ordinate efforts to pursue common interests and objectives in matters of the environment had been a positive development.

59. Mr. Amaziane (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

60. Mr. KRAVETZ (El Salvador) said that his delegation was deeply concerned at the effect which large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing had had on the fish stock of the South Pacific and other oceans and seas and, in particular, the serious consequences which such methods could have for island States of regions whose economies were largely dependent on marine resources. Other effects of that fishing method, such as the damage caused by plastic wastes dumped into oceans, should also be examined.

61. The consensus adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/225 had led to positive results, including the decision by Japan to suspend driftnet fishing in the South Pacific by 1 July 1991, one year in advance of the date stipulated in the resolution. The Secretary-General's report on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing (A/45/663) would be a very important tool for the work of the Committee and other interested bodies.

62. It had been estimated that the commercial fishing industry dumped some 100,000 tons of plastic material, including nets, traps and buoys each year. The next report of the Secretary-General should include a chapter on the adverse impact of plastic wastes on the marine environment. The topic of plastics and other wastes in the oceans should be placed on the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

63. He proposed the establishment of a driftnet identification and registration system for nets abandoned or lost at sea and the creation of reward programmes for persons or groups that recovered such plastic fishing materials.

64. Another aspect of concern to his delegation was the possible introduction of driftnet fishing in other ocean zones. Specifically, there had been reports in August 1990 of boats with driftnets that had been sighted in certain parts of the Caribbean Sea. Such an expansion would violate General Assembly resolution 44/225.

65. Mr. CHHETRI (Bhutan) said that the challenge of environmental degradation could not be met without greater co-operation between the industrial and developing countries that incorporated initiatives in a wider range of areas. His delegation believed that such a commitment existed.

66. The forthcoming Conference on Environment and Development would mark the culmination of the international community's efforts to take global action to ensure both environmental protection and economic growth. Bhutan welcomed in particular the news that every effort could be made to integrate the environment-development relationship at every level and to see to it that the experience and perspectives of developing countries would be brought fully to bear in preparing for the Conference.

(Mr. Chhetri, Bhutan)

67. Development had been a constant challenge for Bhutan. The focus of Bhutan's development had been not "gross national product" but "gross national happiness". The society was deeply rooted in Buddhist values and traditions, which stressed compassion and reverence for all sentient beings. Conservation was thus instilled into every citizen from a very early age. In some instances, the Government had chosen to forgo immediate benefits in the long-term interest of environmental protection.

68. Such a policy had required a number of difficult decisions. For example, national policy gave priority to ecological considerations over commercial benefits for managing the country's considerable forest resources and the country had been highly selective in exploiting its wide range of mineral and other natural resources. The grazing of goats in open spaces was strictly prohibited since that greatly accelerated the desertification process. To strengthen the traditional respect for the environment, school curricula gave close attention to heightening the awareness of young people for conservation issues.

69. Bhutan was, however, mindful of the growing pressure of urbanization, industrial development and growing productivity in agriculture and livestock rearing in a country with a 90 per cent farm population. Such activities, if not properly checked, could, in the delicate Himalayan ecosystem, lead to soil erosion, disruption of water supplies, flood damage and depletion of wildlife populations and their habitats. A recently adopted resolution stressed the need to strengthen Bhutan's natural-resource base through the adoption of an integrated national environment strategy. The strategy was currently being formulated with the assistance of the Government of Denmark.

70. A proposal was currently under consideration to establish a trust fund for environmental conservation with the co-operation of the World Wildlife Fund and the help of bilateral and multilateral donors. The primary objective would be to conserve the largest remaining area of intact forest in the entire Himalayan ecosystem. That would benefit not only Bhutan, but also millions of people living in neighbouring countries.

71. Mr. PANDAY (Nepal) expressed support for the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and said that representatives of the developing countries should be invited, wherever possible and relevant, to participate in the preparations for the Conference. Nepal welcomed the decision by the Preparatory Committee to establish a voluntary fund to assist the participation of developing countries, especially the least developed and hoped that such a fund would receive generous contributions.

72. Ecologically sound development required more resources than conventional development and the developing countries could not be expected to shoulder the additional costs. Accordingly, increased financial flows were needed to those countries. Moreover, a balance must be struck between the need for environmental protection and the need for socio-economic development of the developing countries.

(Mr. Panday, Nepal)

73. An integrated approach to major environmental issues required, inter alia, a further strengthening of UNEP. His delegation therefore fully supported the annual target of a minimum of $100 million in contributions to the Environment Fund by 1992.

74. The international scientific community, which had studied the depletion of the ozone layer in the Antarctic and the Arctic, should turn its attention to other regions, including the Himalayas-Ganges region. The ecology of Nepal's foothills was a crucial determinant for climatic conditions in a large part of southern Asia. If deforestation and soil erosion were allowed to continue at the current rate there would be serious consequences for the entire region. The international community should examine conservation measures for the prevention of soil erosion, improved resource management through agro-forestry and other issues.

75. All countries should be encouraged to adhere to, and comply with, international instruments such as the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances and Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Sofia Protocol concerning the Control of Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides or their Transboundary Fluxes, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and the European Economic Community's Council Directive on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from large combustion plants.

76. U KYAW TINT SWE (Myanmar) said that his delegation set great store by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The emerging consensus that environmental problems could be resolved only by the joint efforts of the industrialized and developing countries and that the industrialized countries bore primary responsibility for environmental problems was a positive development. It had given rise to an awareness that the industrialized countries must take action in their own countries and provide assistance to developing countries in confronting their environmental problems. His delegation welcomed the commitments made at the second meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol, faithful compliance with that instrument would virtually eliminate the production and use of ozone-destroying chemicals.

77. Owing to his Government's policy of incorporating environmental considerations when setting up new industries, there was very little air or water pollution in Myanmar. However, with the growth of private industry, the need for a central institution to ensure environmentally sound practices had become evident. Accordingly, in February 1990 Myanmar had created a National Commission for Environmental Affairs to co-ordinate national environmental efforts and serve as a focal point in Myanmar's bilateral and international co-operation.

78. Myanmar, a country rich in forest resources, had approximately 150,000 square miles of forests, 25 per cent of which were reserves. Those forest resources had been appropriately managed, and the extraction of timber, which was strictly regulated, was on an environmentally sound and sustainable basis. Currently, 80,000 acres of forest land were replanted annually. To further reduce the rate of deforestation - currently only 0.3 per cent - the Government was continuing the

(U Kyaw Tint Swe, Myanmar)

existing programme of planting trees for use as fuel-wood and was implementing an integrated rural development programme to introduce modern agricultural methods in economically backward frontier areas.

79. Myanmar was sharing its experience in forest management with other countries in the area. In March 1990, it had hosted a Regional Seminar/Study Tour on Integrated Land Use and Sustainable Forest Management with the co-operation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and UNDP.

80. Forests and forest products played a key role in Myanmar's economy, and his delegation was therefore greatly distressed by the unilateral action taken by certain developed countries, purportedly to "save the tropical rain forests". Not only were those actions arbitrary, discriminatory and in violation of the provisions of GATT, but they also did not promote environmental protection. Furthermore, it was essential to focus on the main cause of climate change: the carbon dioxide emissions that were triggering the greenhouse effect. The industrialized countries were the source of 75 per cent of all such emissions. His delegation therefore welcomed the decision by the European Economic Community and 10 other developed countries to stabilize carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000 and urged those industrialized countries that had not yet undertaken similar commitments to do so as a matter of utmost urgency.

81. The developing countries must be given a more equitable access to the benefit of the world economy if they were to participate in environmental protection efforts. That meant a supportive international economic environment, transfer of environmentally sound technology on a favourable basis and additional funds for the developing countries.

82. Mr. ABBA (Niger) said that as a Sahelian country, Niger was keenly aware of the social and economic impact of drought and desertification. His Government attached priority to the struggle against those manifestations of environmental degradation, and was conducting a campaign to raise the awareness of the population with regard to environmental issues. In 1984, the Government had organized a national meeting on desertification, at which a global strategy had been drawn up that took into account the need for self-sufficiency in food production and the need to meet energy demands while at the same time preserving and improving the environment.

83. Although much had been done, much remained to be done. Niger's international partners, including the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and the Nordic countries, had provided assistance which had made it possible to carry out several forestry projects. Further international action was urgently needed, particularly during the 1990s.

84. In addressing the problems of the environment and development, it was essential to develop new and renewable sources of energy. In Niger, where wood accounted for 86 per cent of energy consumption in homes, thousands of hectares of forests were being destroyed every year. With the growth of the population and its

(Mr. Abba, Niger)

increasing concentration in urban areas, the demand for energy was likely to double in the next few years. It was therefore imperative to look towards other sources of energy. In response to that challenge, his country was working with the Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the eight other States concerned in combating deforestation. CILSS had recently launched a large-scale regional plan aimed at promoting the use of new and renewable sources of energy, including a programme to promote the use of gas and a programme to promote the use of solar energy. Niger had opted for gas, and was promoting its use through home energy projects designed to stabilize the consumption of fuel-wood by encouraging the use of improved stoves and modern fuels.

85. The process of desertification could not be halted without an increased awareness and commitment on the part of the Sahelian populations, on the one hand and, on the other, the co-operation of the international community. Such co-operation entailed providing an adequate transfer of technology and financial resources. In that regard, his country was encouraged to note the establishment, in June 1990, of the observatory of the Sahara and the Sahel, the purpose of which was to gather the experiences of all concerned countries and the most advanced scientific know-how in an effort to find effective ways to control, in a more co-ordinated fashion, the effects of drought and desertification. Several non-governmental organizations had also played an important role in that regard.

86. He also drew the Committee's attention to the fact that children were the main victims of environmental degradation. It had been demonstrated that from 5 to 10 per cent of malformations and brain damage in unborn babies could be directly linked to environmental problems. Millions of children throughout the world died every year as a result of the absorption of chemical poisons, toxic substances and other pollutants in the water and the air, and others remained seriously handicapped for life. That carnage was due mainly to poor environmental management, and showed what a serious responsibility the present generation had towards future generations. The international community must translate into action the solemn commitment it had undertaken at the recent World Summit for Children.

87. Mr. HOFFMANN (Observer for Switzerland) welcomed the positive results of the recent sessions of the UNEP Governing Council and the Preparatory Committee. The success of the Conference could only be ensured by a joint effort of Governments and international organizations. In that context he said that the agreement reached in Nairobi on the participation of non-governmental organizations should apply also to the forthcoming meetings of the Preparatory Committee.

88. His delegation hoped that, at its next session, the Preparatory Committee would set up Working Group III on legal and institutional matters. That working group would need to make an in-depth study of the respective roles and mandates of the various international organizations. It could also evaluate the effectiveness of existing legal instruments on environment and development, and set guidelines for future work in regard to international responsibility and the settlement of disputes over damage to the global environment.

(Mr. Hoffmann, Observer, Switzerland)

89. Switzerland believed that more resources should be made available to enable the developing countries to comply with the obligations that would ensue from their acceptance of the international agreements currently being prepared. It was in favour of establishing a general funding mechanism rather than a proliferation of separate funds for each legal instrument. The World Bank's proposed Global Environmental Facility could perform such a function. Switzerland would, however, be in favour of orienting some of the facility's financial activities towards particular problems such as climate or biological diversity. It was gratified by the growing number of countries which had ratified or announced their intention of ratifying the Basel Convention.

90. The Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Climate Conference had laid the foundation for the future convention on climate. Switzerland had hoped that the Declaration would produce a political commitment by the industrialized countries first to stabilize and then reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It shared the view of the European Community and other European States regarding the part that UNEP and WMO should play in the negotiations.

91. Switzerland hoped to take part in the preparation and was in favour of setting up the proposed "intergovernmental negotiating committee for a framework convention on climate change", and of parallel protocols being negotiated simultaneously. It was ready to contribute substantially in 1991 and 1992 to the cost of the committee secretariat to be set up at Geneva. It hoped that the framework convention would be accompanied by additional protocols on stabilization followed by reduction of greenhouse gases, reforestation and the specific needs of developing countries and was in favour of setting up working groups on all three immediately.

92. Switzerland welcomed the recent decision taken by the UNEP Governing Council to invite the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to work closely with the negotiating group. IPCC should concentrate on the scientific and technical aspects and thus provide the best possible foundation for the convention. Switzerland hoped, however, that detailed studies would be made of the costs and consequences of response strategies since they would form the basis of the vital political decisions.

93. Gratifying progress had been made in the proposed convention on biological diversity. The convention could be an important outcome of the 1992 Conference and it was essential, therefore, that it should be well prepared. Switzerland attached importance to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) being fully associated with the preparatory work.

94. The conclusion of protocols on forests, to be annexed to the conventions on climate and biological diversity, should be given high priority. They should be directed towards the rational management and the renewal of forests. At a later stage, the protocols could be incorporated in a framework convention on forests. The preparation of such a convention could take place in a United Nations Conference on Forests modelled on the Conference on the Law of the Sea.

(Mr. Hoffmann, Observer, Switzerland)

95. The forthcoming Conference would be an opportunity for a high-level re-examination of relations between the industrialized countries and the developing countries. It was unlikely that all the preparations would be completed by the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee in the spring of 1992 and it might therefore be advisable to provide for a special session of the Preparatory Committee in May 1992. As the host country of the Conference secretariat, Switzerland attached great importance to having the work carried out to the satisfaction of all the participating countries. It expressed confidence in the secretariat and in the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Maurice Strong.

96. Mrs. ORR (Jamaica) said that the urgent need to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life of people in developing countries should be at the heart of any strategy for achieving sustainable development. That did not mean, however, that the developing countries did not wish to deal squarely with the problems of environmental degradation. Jamaica was acutely aware of the dangers of ignoring them, since the island's natural resources were crucial to two important bases of its economy - tourism and agriculture.

97. In a recently adopted five-year development plan, the Government of Jamaica had identified sustainable management of its natural resource-based economy as its basic policy goal. It was seeking to elaborate a national conservation strategy, involving participation by a wide cross-section of society through extensive public debate and sectoral consultations.

98. Jamaica was also involved in the subregional and regional efforts to design a development strategy in harmony with nature and the needs of future generations. In an effort to further strengthen regional ecological co-operation, the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean had adopted a regional action plan for the environment which provided practical guidelines for attaining sustainable development.

99. In addition to environmental degradation, the developing countries must also deal with global warming. The fact that developing countries faced the prospect of new environmental problems to which they had contributed practically nothing added another burden to their development prospects. It was therefore vital to ensure that those countries could participate actively at all levels of the negotiating process for a convention on climate change. Specific measures in favour of the special circumstances and needs of island States, which had already been characterized as environmentally fragile, would need to be addressed.

100. The programmes of structural adjustment which many developing countries had been obliged to pursue had limited expenditure in the public sector in areas such as environmental management. Moreover, there was a continued tendency among donors to impose environmental conditionalities on public sector investment programmes. The arbitrary use of environmental criteria and insistence on channelling funds into areas not among a Government's priorities would not serve the cause of world-wide sustainable development. While the recently announced initiatives to provide developing countries with financial assistance in certain fields of the

(Mrs. Orr, Jamaica)

environment were to be welcomed, those facilities should be extended to cover environmental issues which the countries themselves considered essential.

101. Ways must also be found to enable all countries to have access to technologies that promoted development while respecting the integrity of the environment. Affordable access to environmentally sound technologies would promote a more environmentally conscious world. Adequate human resources development in the field of environmental protection was also a key issue. The forthcoming Conference offered a unique opportunity to establish clear links between environment and development and to elaborate a framework for the transfer of resources and technology to developing countries, set up new funding mechanisms and promote more favourable economic and trade practices. Her delegation expressed concern at the inadequacy of the voluntary fund intended to enable developing countries to participate in those deliberations.

102. Her delegation welcomed the important decisions taken at the second special session of the UNEP Governing Council in connection with the 1992 Conference, as well as on strengthening the role of UNEP and identifying priority environmental areas.

103. Mr. GATHUNGU (Kenya) fully endorsed the statement by the Chairman of the Group of 77 expressing the position of the developing countries on the issues under consideration.

104. Climate change was one of the major environmental issues confronting the international community and his delegation appreciated the work being done by WMO and UNEP on the question. Both organizations had been supportive of the process of preparing negotiations for a framework convention on climate change, as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 44/207, and the recent meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Government representatives jointly convened by the two organizations was a clear indication that the process of negotiation had begun. In his delegation's view, what was now needed in order to make the negotiating process effective and productive was to ensure that all Governments, relevant United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations participated in it. A special fund should be established in order to enable developing countries to take part in the process. It was important to maintain the momentum and experience already acquired, and WMO and UNEP should take the lead in the process. Their mandates should be reaffirmed by the General Assembly so that they could begin at once to prepare for the forthcoming round of negotiations in Washington.

105. The Secretary-General's report on the issue of driftnet fishing (A/45/663) correctly spelled out the issues involved and the course to be taken in order to achieve sustainable use of marine resources that would be beneficial to all. In that connection, the action taken by Japan with regard to the moratorium was commendable and encouraging.

106. The year 1990 might eventually be seen as the year in which mankind had finally begun to take action to save and restore the planet. Much work remained to

(Mr. Gathungu, Kenya)

be done in order to reach the objectives of the 1992 Conference, and all Member States must contribute to the best of their abilities.

107. Mr. LUCAS (Guyana) welcomed the progress made over the past year on environmental issues. Proper care and use of the environment had always been uppermost in his country's national development efforts. That was evident in the careful way it had handled its forestry resources and, in recent times, Guyana had intensified its efforts to ensure that sound environmental policies continued to be an integral part of the country's way of life. Within the framework of the National Environmental Education Programme, the national environment agency had embarked on an effort to ensure that Guyanese developed a full awareness of the environment and the need for its protection. It was also collaborating at the regional level and, at the international level, it had moved to intensify collaboration with UNEP.

108. The preventive approach underlying Guyana's environmental philosophy was reflected in the Programme for Sustainable Tropical Forestry (A/45/345) whose goal was to provide humanity with the capacity to utilize and conserve tropical rain forests and their biological diversity. One valuable outcome of the initiative could be the creation of appropriate technology. The advantage of the Programme was that it offered scope for determining the appropriateness of technology in the environment it was intended to benefit.

109. Mr. TRAORE (Mali) welcomed the progress made during the past year towards meeting the ecological crisis. Much had been said about the critical economic situation of Africa. It was true that the African countries as a whole had the heavy burden of restructuring the economies they had inherited from their colonial past and that despite 30 years of enormous effort they had not yet succeeded in integrating themselves into the international economic environment. Those developing countries, which had already been destabilized by the foreign debt crisis, now found themselves faced with environmental problems such as desertification and drought as well as the many obstacles to their development created by the anti-pollution and environmental protection measures affecting world industrial investment trends. Nevertheless, Africa remained hopeful, and his country was grateful for the international aid it had received since the great drought of 1973 and the enormous efforts undertaken in its arid zone.

110. Environmental questions had been given an important place in Mali's five-year development plan for 1987-1992. At the same time, as part of an integrated approach, industrial development had been regarded as an important factor for agricultural development.

111. It was to be hoped that the degradation of the environment and climate change would provoke a world-wide crisis of conscience that would lead the international community to take decisive remedial action. The forthcoming Conference on Environment and Development would provide an appropriate framework for such action. The Conference would provide an opportunity not only to achieve a global consensus on the whole range of environmental problems but to agree on

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

radical measures to correct the technological defects which had caused grave damage to the planet's ecosystem.

112. In December 1990, Mali would host a ministerial conference of OAU on the environment and sustainable development. The legal approach to the controversial question of transboundary movements of dangerous wastes still suffered from a lack of co-ordination, and OAU had undertaken to work out a convention intended to safeguard the African States from the consequences of such movements.

113. Mali was confident that in the light of the ecological crisis confronting it, humanity would mobilize its immense scientific and technological capacities to safeguard one of its most precious possessions, planet Earth.

114. Mr. KJELLEN (Sweden) said that the position of the Nordic countries on the issues currently before the Committee had been stated by the representative of Finland at the 39th meeting. He merely wished to make a few additional comments, in his capacity as the Swedish representative to the Preparatory Committee and as Chairman of Working Group I.

115. His delegation had been very encouraged to note that delegations felt that the work of the Preparatory Committee had been satisfactory and he hoped that the General Assembly would confirm the decisions taken by that Committee.

116. Turning to the issue of climate change, he said that the Second World Climate Conference held in Geneva had been very satisfactory, but there was now a need to move forward and hold concrete negotiations on the issues that had been raised. The resolution to be adopted at the current session of the General Assembly on that subject would contribute to the success of the negotiations. It was clear that there must be a single negotiating body, and that the negotiating process must be integrated into the overall efforts leading up to the Conference. The results of the negotiations would be channelled to the 1992 Conference through the Preparatory Committee, and hence would be included in the total context of the Conference.

117. The discussion in the Second Committee had been helpful in underlining that the Conference was truly a conference on environment and development. Solutions to global problems could only be found in a spirit of global solidarity. The Preparatory Committee itself and the working groups must be guided by the desire to promote the necessary combination of environmental action and development efforts.

118. Mr. LOOS (World Bank) said that the experience of the World Bank had shown that environmental factors cut across all development sectors. A purely technical approach to the environmental challenge that failed to take social, cultural and public health considerations into account would result in a wide array of social problems.

119. The fight against poverty was at the core of the World Bank's mission. At the same time, the Bank recognized the need to ensure that changes were constructive and that they did not destroy the resources on which human progress was based.

(Mr. Loos, World Bank)

Poverty was a major cause of environmental degradation, and progress that helped reduce poverty by improving incomes, introducing new skills and fostering family planning were also effective means of environmental protection. The World Bank had long been committed to addressing the complex aspects of environmental problems, but the rapidly unfolding events of recent years now called for substantially greater attention to environmental matters and a more comprehensive approach than had previously been pursued by the Bank.

120. In its approach to the issues of environment and development, the Bank underscored the need to correct economic policy incentives that promoted environmental abuse, and encouraged activities aimed at combating human and environmental deprivation. The Bank was also strengthening its long-standing policy of scrutinizing development projects for their environmental impact and withholding support from those where safeguards were inadequate, while institutionalizing an approach to natural resource management that put a premium on conservation. That was especially important in Africa, where desertification was threatening productive capacity, and in the tropical-rain-forest regions, where the negative impact of environmental deterioration had global implications.

121. The Bank was also aware of the fact that, although present and future needs did not always conflict, in some cases they did, sometimes very seriously. It was working to implement its philosophical commitment with practical operational guidelines, in the belief that increased concern for measuring the cost of resource depletion might help the Bank and others to make better choices and contribute to the enhancement of the sustainability of development initiatives. The ultimate objective of the Bank was to introduce a standard approach to environmental assessment for all Bank activities. The new environmental assessment guidelines designed by the Bank were intended to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to deal with environmental problems and to ensure that those countries and the Bank took environmental concerns into account at the earliest stage of designing development projects. The groups likely to be affected by the projects, as well as non-governmental organizations, would be fully involved in the process.

122. The Bank's commitment to environmental issues did not detract from its primary mission of global development. It had increased environmental lending and lending for population programmes. Environmental issues were fully integrated into the Bank's approach to development, and would be more so in future. The Bank was taking new initiatives in the growing international effort to protect the environment in developing countries. One third of all its projects, one half of its energy projects and 60 per cent of its agricultural projects included specific environmental components. The interface between economic actions and environmental measures was of particular significance, and the Bank had greatly increased its collaboration with member Governments of international organizations and with non-governmental organizations. Sustainable development demanded a transfer of adequate resources. The proposal for a Global Environmental Facility, which the Bank was promoting in partnership with UNEP and UNDP, represented a significant move in that direction. The issue of global climate change was a complex and urgent one. The risks involved were too high to justify complacency or evasion;

(Mr. Loos, World Bank)

the international community could not sit back and hope the problem would somehow go away.

123. The Bank was closely monitoring research on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, and would continue to assess the economic and social impact of that interaction and its repercussion on natural resources. It would actively assist developing countries in the formulation of appropriate development responses to global warming concerns. In particular, it would support developing countries' programmes aimed at moving to cleaner fuels and processing systems. The industrialized countries also faced the challenge of fulfilling their own responsibilities, since many aspects of e onomic activity and lifestyle in those countries contributed to the world's accumulated pollution and resource-depletion problems.

124. The pressing environmental problems facing the international community called for more institutional co-ordination and political resolve than had yet been mustered by the industrial community. The Bank could play a much more active role in global efforts to preserve and protect the environment in developing countries, working with an invigorated coalition of Governments, institutions, organs and environmental activists the world over. The preparations for the Conference on Environment and Development and the Conference itself afforded an opportunity for focusing on the fundamental factors involved. The stakes were high for rich and poor alike. Development that was not sustainable was not development at all, but only an illusion. The human family must act in partnership to meet the need for constant renewal of the environment in order to ensure the well-being of coming generations.

The meeting rose at 7.35 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
44th meeting
held on
Monday, 19 November 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: EXTERNAL DEBT CRISIS AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/C.2/45/L.44)

Draft resolution on the international debt crisis and development: enhanced international co-operation towards a durable solution to the external debt problem of developing countries (A/C.2/45/L.44)

1. Mr. ORTIZ (Bolivia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77, said that efforts had been made to express it in terms of conciliation and co-operation. He hoped, therefore, that it would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/C.2/45/L.24/Rev.1, L.11 and L.43)

Draft resolution on a code of conduct on transnational corporations (A/C.2/45/L.24/Rev.1)

2. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco), speaking in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, suggested that, as informal consultations had failed to produce a consensus, more time should be given to study the text.

3. Mr. SOBERANIS (Mexico), speaking in his capacity as sponsor of the draft resolution, said that, as a number of delegations wished to consult their capitals, he would not oppose the granting of more time if that would enable the text to be adopted by consensus.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to postpone its decision on the draft resolution until further informal consultations had been held, enabling it to reach a consensus.

5. It was so decided.

Draft resolution on a special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with ministerial participation (A/C.2/45/L.43 and A/C.2/45/L.11)

6. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco), speaking in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, said that he was submitting the revised draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.43 on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.11, at which the co-operation of delegations had produced a consensus. He therefore suggested that the text should be adopted without a vote.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the text without a vote. Given the adoption of the resolution, and if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to withdraw the draft resolution on a special ministerial meeting of the Economic and Social Council (A/C.2/45/L.11).

8. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 79: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(b) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (A/45/3, 15 (Supplement No. 15), 442, 453 and Add.1, 565 and 588)

(c) REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUBSTANTIAL NEW PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE 1980s FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (A/45/695)

9. Mr. DADZIE (Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), said that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s was remarkable in that it recognized the complexity of development focused on non-economic factors such as human rights, democratization and popular participation in the development process - values which were equally crucial at the international level. The Programme also recognized that each country must chart its own course, with the support of the international community, and that the economic growth of the least developed countries was essential for attaining other Programme objectives.

10. Other novel features of the Programme were its comprehensive treatment of structural adjustment, resource flows and debt, population policies and human resource development and its emphasis on the role of various actors - particularly women, entrepreneurs and non-governmental organizations. It also stressed that national policies for sustainable growth must seek to make economies more adaptable to changes in the external environment, without affecting the basic standard of living or long-term growth potential, and to allocate resources, including contributions from the public and private sectors, more effectively. However, it also made clear that national policies could not succeed without a supportive external environment characterized by, inter alia, financial flows, debt strategies and improved market access.

11. The Programme also recognized the importance of effective follow-up and monitoring. and of linkages between the national, regional and, above all, global levels in the follow-up phase. UNCTAD was the focal point for reviewing and appraising implementation of the Programme and its follow-up at the global level. In fulfilling that role, it would rely on the co-operation of other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, particularly the World Bank and UNDP.

12. Primary commodities were a source of grave concern for many developing countries which relied heavily on the foreign exchange generated by commodity exports to finance their development: out of 127 countries for which data were available, 108 depended on commodities for over half their export earnings. The report described structural deficiencies on the world commodity markets, including unstable and historically low prices and a secular decline in the demand for raw materials. Uncertainties engendered by the Gulf crisis and the changes taking place in Eastern Europe, and the slow-down in the economies of the industrialized countries were also affecting the prices of primary commodities.

13. The Committee on Commodities, through its Working Party on Diversification, Processing, Marketing and Distribution, including Transportation, was concerned with the diversification of economic activities in commodity-dependent countries.

(Mr. Dadzie)

That would reduce their vulnerability to changing conditions and to instability on the commodity markets. The Working Party had reiterated that, while individual countries were themselves primarily responsible for diversifying, their efforts must be bolstered by growth in world trade and a favourable external environment. Access to markets, infrastructural development, and the availability of technology would be key factors in the diversification process. Improved information flows to aid investment decisions was an area in which international co-operation would be vital. The Working Party had also stressed the need for increased official bilateral and multilateral resources, including voluntary contributions to the Second Account of the Common Fund for Commodities, and for private investment to finance diversification projects and programmes.

14. The Committee on Commodities was devoting special attention to strengthening producer/consumer co-operation, taking into account environmental and health factors and technological changes. It would also address the concept of sustainable development as related to commotities, and propose issues for consideration at the eighth session of UNCTAD.

15. The UNCTAD secretariat had participated in the preparations for the meeting of governmental experts of island developing countries, held in New York in June 1990 (A/45/453). It had compiled extensive information from various organizations of the United Nations system on their activities in favour of island developing countries and issued a number of analytical and background documents. The meeting of experts had adopted a report entitled "Challenges and opportunities: Strategic framework", describing the specific concerns of island developing countries, particularly the small and remote island developing countries. Problems requiring action by the international community included weak transport and infrastructures, an inadequate resource base, vulnerability to natural disasters, weak institutional infrastructure, low levels of human resource development and heavy reliance on foreign markets. At its recent session, the Trade and Development Board had welcomed the framework as a forward-looking reflection of the partnership between donors and island developing countries. The Board had also stressed the need to follow up the report and to examine, in the context of sustainable development, the implications of sea level rise associated with climate change.

16. The provisional agenda of the eighth session of UNCTAD sought to build on the outcome of the seventh session. It was also based on the Declarations adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session and on the occasion of UNCTAD's twenty-fifth anniversary. The eighth session's point of departure would be an evaluation of the significance of long-term structural changes for sustainable development and the expansion of international trade in an interdependent world economy. The session would focus on major policy issues, including interdependence, debt and sustainable development, international trade, technology and commodities.

17. The Board had also considered the interdependence of trade, development finance and the international monetary system, focusing, in particular, on the economic consequences of recent events in the Persian Gulf. The resolution adopted

by the Board contributed its most detailed substantive statement on interpedendence since the seventh session of UNCTAD.

18. The Board's resolution on debt and development problems of developing countries took into account recent initiatives by Governments and international institutions, including the work of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General on Debt. The resolution called for comprehensive, rather than separate treatment of categories of debtor countries and sought to promote more rapid and thorough implementation of new policy approaches and new thinking in the evolution of debt strategy.

19. The resolution on sustainable development marked a watershed. It integrated the objectives of sustainable development in the work of all areas of UNCTAD, provided the UNCTAD secretariat with an initial work programme and set guidelines for further intergovernmental work. It offered opportunities for fresh thinking and policy-making by UNCTAD in that area.

20. The past year had also marked a turning point in the work of UNCTAD on trade among countries having different economic and social systems, particularly East/South trade. It was generally agreed that, in the light of policy changes in the Eastern European countries, a separate agenda item on East/South trade was no longer necessary.

21. In recent weeks, developing countries had become concerned that the outcome of the Uruguay Round might be a fait accompli among the major trading countries. As all participants had a common stake in the successful outcome of the Round, it was to be hoped that serious consideration would be given to such issues as improving market access for developing countries; granting most-favoured-nation status unconditionally; and elaborating rules and principles consistent with the economic, social and technological objectives of developing countries.

22. Together with the President of the United Nations Conference on an International Code of Conduct on the Transfer of Technology, he had engaged in a series of consultations with regional groups and interested Governments, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/216. In those consultations, it had become clear that it would be necessary to rethink the conceptual basis for norms and standards on the transfer of technology - a view that was shared by most delegations. Consequently, it was to be hoped that an agreement could be reached on a global framework of norms and standards. While there was not yet sufficient agreement among regional groups and delegations to reconvene the Conference, further discussions in the intergovernmental working group might lead to useful recommendations on establishing more stable relationships between suppliers and recipients of technology. Accordingly, a draft resolution agreed to by all regional groups within UNCTAD would be submitted to the Second Committee; it called for continued consultations on the code.

23. Mr. ORTIZ (Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that, while in its recent Declaration of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, the Group had recognized that the developing countries themselves were primarily responsible for their development, a favourable economic environment was also crucial. As the growing interdependence and internationalization of markets created new risks and imperatives for the development strategies of developing countries, international co-operation for development was fully justified.

24. In the area of trade and development, the consolidation of a truly open multilateral trading system was essential for the growth and development of developing countries. In that connection, the Uruguay Round offered a unique opportunity to generate a new consensus within the United Nations system on international economic co-operation. Although the Uruguay Round seemed deadlocked at the moment, it was to be hoped that negotiations would be concluded on schedule and that the outcome would be positive and balanced. The Group also hoped that the trend towards integrating new economic blocs in Europe would lead to a greater opening of world markets in general, and ultimately benefit all countries. Every effort must be made to ensure that protectionism did not gain strength in the process and deprive developing countries of markets for their exports. To that end, the principles and objectives of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) must be respected and measures must be taken to eliminate tariff barriers in developed countries.

25. It would also be necessary to liberalize trade in textiles and leather goods; honour multilateral commitments on the trade of goods and ensure that such commitments were not subordinated to concessions in other areas; expand the generalized system of preferences so that it encompassed more products; apply the most-favoured-nation clause coherently, free of political conditions, account being taken of the needs of developing countries; and support the process of change in the eastern European economies which, in turn, increased the chance that developing countries would be able to diversify and improve trade agreements with those countries. The Group also attached importance to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/215 on economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, and looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

26. Continually deteriorating terms of trade had led to an ever sharper decline in the export earnings of developing countries, particularly in Africa. As commodities were fundamental to the economies of most developing countries, commodity markets must function under more stable and predictable conditions. That would require more effective functioning of existing international agreements and the conclusion of new international agreements providing for more transparent commodity markets. There was also a need for international agreements designed to facilitate the entry of primary and processed commodities from developing countries in the markets of developed countries. The international community must support efforts by the developing countries to diversify their commodity sectors. Lastly, it would be important to strengthen and expand the scope of compensatory financing mechanisms in order to cover reduced export earnings from commodities.

(Mr. Ortiz, Bolivia)

27. The international economic environment could be improved only by increasing co-operation in the dialogue on commodities, reducing internal and external imbalances and co-ordinating the economic and monetary policies of all countries, in accordance with Trade and Development Board resolution 387 (XXXVII), adopted on 17 October 1990. In addition, strengthened efforts by UNCTAD, with the support of the international community, were necessary to combat restrictive trade practices.

28. The Group stressed once again the urgent necessity for a set of universal standards and principles aimed at promoting access to technology and its dissemination on equitable terms, in order to enhance the international competitiveness of the developing countries. The Group therefore reiterated its support for an international code of conduct on the transfer of technology.

29. The Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly had addressed the special development problems and needs of the island developing countries. It was to be hoped that the General Assembly would adopt the strategy formulated by the group of governmental experts of island developing countries and of donor countries and organizations.

30. The policies formulated at the eighth session of UNCTAD, to be held in Latin America in 1991, should help foster the growth and development of the developing countries and contribute to the creation of a sound, stable and more equitable world economy, thereby strengthening the role of UNCTAD. The ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 held to prepare the session would make concerted efforts to ensure that those objectives would be attained.

31. Mr. AHMIA (Algeria) said that the 1980s had had disastrous consequences for the least developed countries, as economic stagnation had impoverished their inhabitants and eroded their social and economic infrastructures. The international community had failed to achieve the objectives of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries, despite the sacrifices made by those countries. Moreover, while there had only been 30 least developed countries at the time of the first United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, their number had grown in one decade to 40. It was obvious that those countries would remain in that category indefinitely, and additional African countries would soon be added to the list.

32. The failure of many countries to honour their official development assistance commitments had helped to ensure the failure of the Substantial New Programme. Likewise, the failure to honour external assistance commitments made at the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly had compromised the success of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. If such failures continued in the 1990s, not only the least developed countries but the international community as a whole would suffer.

33. The Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries should have produced a series of effective measures to revitalize economic growth in those countries, but the results of the Conference had not been commensurate with the

(Mr. Ahmia, Algeria)

legitimate expectations of the countries concerned. The fact that the Conference had found it difficult to reaffirm the 0.15-per-cent target was significant, and the adoption of a series of options that was likely to weaken the developed countries' commitment to the countries most in need reflected a general lack of interest in the development of the least developed countries. It was interesting that that lack of interest was evident at a time when solidarity was being displayed to exceptional degree vis-à-vis the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Even so, the modesty of the measures adopted at the Conference did not justify failure to implement the newly established Programme of Action with determination.

34. Mr. GRAHAM (United States of America) said that the tenfold increase in the volume of trade since the Second World War and countries' eagerness to join GATT attested to the success of free trade as an economic policy and to the success of GATT itself as a forum in which to resolve trade-policy differences. The spectacular economic performance, over the past 30 years, of developing countries which had vigorously pursued export-oriented trade policies was further evidence of the efficacy of free trade.

35. The United States had not hesitated to put its free-trade principles into action. Not only did it have one of the lowest tariff levels in the world, but its domestic market was among the most competitive and accessible. It would continue to ensure that its markets remained open both for the benefit of its own people and for citizens of other countries who wished to do business with it. However, it would not condone such unfair trading practices as dumping, prohibitive domestic agricultural subsidies, obstructive import regulations and various other non-tariff barriers were all protective measures. Elimination of those impediments to trade was a major goal of United States policy, and his delegation fully supported the sustained reduction and policing of trade-restricting practices through the GATT framework.

36. At the same time as it pursued principles of fair trade, the United States wished to maximize the access of the poorer developing countries to markets in the United States and elsewhere in the industrialized world. Since trade offered greater hope for economic growth than did pure development aid, the United States was committed to importing a broad and growing variety of goods under its generalized system of preferences. In 1989, its duty-free imports from the developing world had amounted to over $10 billion.

37. The Uruguay Round was justifiably focused on agriculture, where tariffs and subsidies combined to distort local markets and impede world trade. After four decades of tariff reductions and liberalization in world trade, agriculture remained one of the most highly protected sectors of the world economy. Every nation could benefit from the efficient markets and lower consumer prices which free trade in agriculture would bring about.

38. In its recent report (A/45/15) the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board clearly recognized the importance of free trade to economic development and noted that

(Mr. Graham, United States)

growth-enhancing trade required not only open markets but also appropriate domestic fiscal and monetary policies. Capital from either domestic or foreign sources must be made available for productive investment projects. In welcoming the recognition of those principles, the United States urged the Committee to continue to observe an appropriate division of labour between the work of UNCTAD and that of the General Assembly.

39. Collusion, either on the part of nations or corporations, was a potential threat to free trade. The need to preserve competition in the market-place must be balanced with a healthy wariness about imposing trade-restricting regulations. Those competing priorities had been reflected in the original 1980 Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, which recognized the importance of using rules of reason and of reviewing corporate conduct on a case-by-case basis.

40. Despite their efforts to diversify, many developing countries continued to derive large proportions of their export revenues from trade in primary commodities. That was often a risky undertaking, since demand for unprocessed raw materials tended to be quite inflexible, and oversupply forced down the prices of some commodities for long periods. While some producer nations had entered into supply cartels, such accords had generally failed either to reduce the fluctuation in prices or increase long-run average commodity prices. Policies which interfered with the price signals received by producers and consumers alike ran the risk of distorting incentives, to the detriment of both parties. Producers would benefit in the long run if they were allowed to react directly to circumstances in the international market-place, and free trade was the policy best suited to achieving that end.

41. Mr. HUSLID (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries on agenda item 79 (b), said that the consensus resolutions and decisions adopted by the UNCTAD Board at the first part of its thirty-seventh session a few weeks earlier provided a good basis for further work. The current Trade and Development Report had led to a stimulating discussion of interdependence at that session, while the informal exchanges of views with independent economic experts and the Director-General of GATT had been successful and should be repeated.

42. He welcomed the adoption of Board resolution 388 (XXXVII), which reflected current thinking on the issue of debt and development and should serve as a source of inspiration for discussions on that subject during the current session of the General Assembly. He also welcomed Board decision 384 (XXXVII), on the contribution of UNCTAD to sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development would generate new ways of thinking and ensure that environmental considerations were taken into account in all forms of development without serving as a pretext for the introduction of protectionist measures.

43. As an open international trading system was one of the pillars of the interdependent world economy, it was important that the Uruguay Round should reach a successful conclusion. He hoped that the necessary political determination would

(Mr. Huslid, Norway)

be displayed so that the negotiations would benefit all participants. Protectionism and so-called "managed trade" could not be allowed to increase. There must be a substantial and broad-based liberalization of international trade in goods and services, with trade in textiles and clothing also brought under GATT rules, a move which would benefit consumers in industrialized countries as well as producers in developing countries.

44. The particular needs of the least developed countries should not be forgotten: special measures would remain necessary, particularly as a general liberalization of trade might erode some of those countries' existing preference margins. The agreements reached at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries should be followed up in the appropriate forums.

45. In view of commodity markets' impact on the trade of many developing countries, the economies of developing countries should be diversified and those countries should be more involved in the processing, marketing and distribution of their own commodities. The Uruguay Round and the Common Fund for Commodities might provide help in that regard. The support and co-operation of the international community were necessary if growth opportunities were to be found in the areas of commodity production and trade. Fuller use of South/South co-operation would also increase the developing countries' market opportunities.

46. The profound political changes which had taken place during the past year had shown that democracy and respect for human rights were prerequisites for successful development strategies. The Nordic countries agreed that people must constitute the focus of such strategies and that development ultimately meant the full utilization of human resources. Many of the developing countries were concerned that recent events in Eastern and Central Europe would divert attention and resources away from their needs. The Nordic countries would do their best to prevent such an unfortunate development.

47. Preparations for the eighth session of UNCTAD must move beyond the procedural discussions which had taken up too much of the Conference's time in recent years. Substantive issues must be more fully explored. The fact that the Board had agreed on the agenda for that session augured well for its success, particularly as it would follow the Uruguay Round and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

48. Mr. TANLAY (Turkey) said that, the Gulf crisis notwithstanding, encouraging developments on the international scene must be reinforced by sound economic and social development. After a decade of missed opportunities, world economic prospects had improved, although threats of inflation generated by rising oil prices must be checked.

49. Despite many obstacles, the developing countries were endeavouring to revitalize their economies, diversify their production and gain access to markets. Rapid structural adjustment in the developed countries would open markets there to

(Mr. Tanlay, Turkey)

the growing number of exports being produced by developing countries as a result of their economic restructuring. International trade had always constituted the chief means of growth for developing countries, particularly those in debt. For many of those countries, vigorous and sustained growth depended more on a free and open multilateral trading system than on financial assistance. Unfortunately, the developing countries' efforts to find new outlets for their exports were being thwarted by protectionist measures imposed by developed countries.

50. The most disturbing aspect of that phenomenon was the proliferation of non-tariff measures in recent years. Anti-dumping measures and bilateral trade agreements in a growing number of developed countries made it difficult to apply the principle of competition in a multilateral trading system. Discriminatory measures imposed against the exports of developing countries should be looked at carefully; agriculture was one of the most problematic areas, particularly where subsidies were concerned. Likewise, the unfavourable treatment given to textile exports from developing countries was indicative of a broader trend.

51. He was also concerned at the creation of large trading blocs which used protectionist barriers to exclude exports from non-member countries. The formation of such blocs should not impede the growth of world trade. The most important task facing the international community in the area of trade was the maintenance of an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. Accordingly, his delegation supported the strengthening and expansion of such a system and hoped that the Uruguay Round would reach a successful conclusion in the next few weeks.

52. Mr. SELIVONCHIK (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that international trade continued to be marked by various kinds of unilateral discriminatory practices, falling commodity prices, and external indebtedness, all of which destabilized trade and economic relations and gave rise to inconsistencies in trade, monetary and financial relations. The complexity and dimensions of such problems and the need to achieve sustainable development required that both the national interests of individual countries and the interests of all participants in the international economy should be taken into account.

53. His delegation commended the work of UNCTAD, which had made a major contribution to the successful conclusion of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, to the work of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the drafting of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. In its future work, UNCTAD should concentrate on the imbalance of trade and ways of promoting its effective international regulation; international monetary and financial problems; and ways of solving the problem of external debt and overcoming underdevelopment.

54. The profound changes in the countries of Eastern Europe contributed to a more active integration of their economies into the world economy and to the development of trade and economic ties. The economic reforms taking place in those countries created favourable conditions for expanding markets and, in particular, increasing the exports of developing countries to that region.

(Mr. Selivonchik, Byelorussian SSR)

55. In July 1990, the Byelorussian Parliament had adopted its Declaration on State Sovereignty, which offered new opportunities for the participation of the Byelorussian SSR in the activities of the international community. The Byelorussian SSR was carrying out a radical restructuring of its economy. Recently, its Parliament had adopted a programme providing for its transition to a market economy over a 27-month period ending in 1992. The programme provided for an effective self-regulatory mechanism and stimuli for economic activity, the formation of a new economic environment based on diverse forms of property ownership, the development of entrepreneurship and competition, openness and integration into the economic activities of the Soviet Union and the world economy. The Republic was establishing its own credit, budgetary and taxation systems, and was independently deciding issues relevant to its foreign economic ties. In the current complex conditions, transition to a market economy was possible only through the implementation of emergency measures to stabilize the economy, improve finances, strengthen cash turnover, support existing economic ties and develop new ones, halt the fall in production and protect the Republic's consumer market by supplying it with goods for which there was heavy demand.

56. In the disposal and privatization of State property, all citizens of the Republic had the opportunity to become owners of such property. By the end of 1991, most of the service, trade and public catering enterprises could be sold, rented or transferred free of charge, and a significant number of branches of light industry and construction organizations could be privatized. Byelorussia was also setting up its own banking system and introducing a standardized system for taxing enterprises. The introduction of free pricing would be accompanied by an increase in retail consumer prices, and there would be a system for protecting the population from inflation. State control of the prices of a limited number of goods and services would be maintained. During the transition to a market economy, a special system of social guarantees and protection for various social groups would be introduced in order to prevent inflation and temporary unemployment from lowering the standard of living. In addition, measures would be taken to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

57. Implementation of the programme would lead to improved economic activity, better use of the Republic's labour, material and financial resources and the achievement of a balance between production and consumption. The Parliament was considering a package of legislation to regulate economic activity, including laws on property, rent, land, foreign economic activities, hard-currency funds and transactions in the Republic, and joint ventures in the Byelorussian SSR with the participation of Soviet and foreign juridical persons.

58. The Byelorussian SSR was taking concrete steps to become integrated in the world economy through trade, the establishment of joint projects, enterprises and companies and the development of direct foreign economic and scientific and technological ties. Under recent legislation on foreign economic activities, foreign States had the right to open trade and establish economic delegations in the Republic, and the Byelorussian SSR could likewise establish such delegations abroad on the basis of appropriate agreements. The new legislation provided vast

(Mr. Selivonchik, Byelorussian SSR)

opportunities for various kinds of foreign capital investment. The Byelorussian SSR was interested in improving its foreign economic ties with both developed and developing States.

59. A number of joint ventures in various areas of the economy, including joint ventures with Western firms, were being set up in the Republic. Such ventures could have unlimited shares of foreign capital.

60. Dozens of Byelorussian enterprises exported their goods to more than 100 foreign countries, and the Byelorussian SSR was convinced that, as its economy was gradually transformed to a market economy, its foreign-trade volume would expand. However, since it lacked marketing experience, it had difficulties finding access for its products on the world market. It was therefore interested in acquiring managerial experience, and it welcomed the offers made by a number of countries to provide assistance in that area.

61. In recent years, the Republic's economy had been seriously undermined by the Chernobyl disaster. A number of enterprises had been closed, one fifth of the Republic's agricultural land was unusable and livestock breeding had decreased. There was an urgent need to resettle approximately 130,000 people in "clean" areas; that required the construction of new housing, hospitals, schools and children's institutions. In order to mitigate the consequences of the catastrophe, a wide range of problems must be solved, including the production of medicines and the construction and equipping of medical, diagnostic and research centres and dispensaries. The Republic was interested in solving those problems together with foreign partners, intergovernmental and international organizations, agencies and programmes, scientific and business circles, and individuals.

62. Mr. MACHIDERA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), speaking on agenda item 79 (c), welcomed the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. As the economies of those countries were predominantly agricultural, it was logical that the Conference Programme of Action gave high priority to agriculture and other areas directly relevant to FAO's activities. He also noted with satisfaction that the Conference Declaration placed particular emphasis on rural development and increased food production.

63. FAO had collaborated closely with the UNCTAD secretariat in preparing for the Conference and continued to view the least developed countries, which accounted for 50 per cent of the FAO field programme, as one of its main concerns. FAO had helped least developed countries to deal with man-made and natural disasters which had affected their agricultural and economic development and had provided policy-related technical assistance to the least developed countries. The FAO Conference had laid particular emphasis, at its twenty-fifth session, on the policy advisory role of FAO, especially at the country level. The Confernce had also recommended that, on the basis of FAO's comparative advantage and experience, that organization should be recognized as the lead agency and co-ordinator for sectoral and sub-sectoral reviews in its fields of competence.

(Mr. Machidera, FAO)

64. Successful implementation of the Paris Programme of Action in the 1990s was the key to structural transformation of the least developed countries, and FAO was ready to assist them in providing follow-up and monitoring at the national, regional and global levels.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

65. The CHAIRMAN announced that a number of delegations wished to join in sponsoring draft resolutions which the Committee would be considering: draft resolutions and respective sponsors were A/C.2/45/L.14/Rev.1 (agenda item 87) - Italy, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Kingdom; A/C.2/45/L.15 (agenda item 86 (b)) - Trinidad and Tobago; A/C.2/45/L.17 (agenda item 86 (b)) - Jordan and the United Arab Emirates; A/C.2/45/L.25 (agenda item 12) - Liechtenstein; A/C.2/45/L.26 (agenda item 79 (d)) - Ethiopia and the Philippines; and A/C.2/45/L.34 (agenda item 86 (b)) - Romania, Trinidad and Tobago, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.